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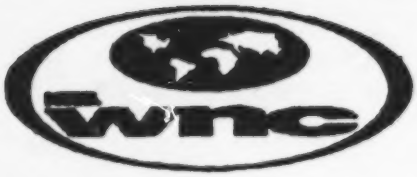

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Daily Report
Central Eurasia

FBIS-SOV-96-020 *30 January 1996*

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Terrorist Activity

Three-Day Break Announced at Hostage Talks in Chechnya

LD3001114496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1004 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 30 January (ITAR-TASS) — A three-day break until Friday was announced today during the consultations between representatives of Dagestan and Dudayev held in Chechnya's village of Novogroznenskiy. The consultations have been discussing the release of 12 Siberian militiamen, ITAR-TASS has learned from the head of the Khasavyurt main interior ministry department, Akhmed Adiyev, who was instructed by the Dagestan Government to conduct the talks.

The Dagestan side believes that common points of contact have been found at the talks. This afternoon [30 January] Akhmed Adiyev is expected to travel to Novosibirsk to accompany five militiamen returning home. They were released on Monday [29 January].

Zavgayev Negotiating With Chechen Rebels To Free Hostages

LD2901181796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1746 GMT 29 Jan 96

[By Oleg Artyushin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, January 29 (ITAR-TASS) — Chechen leader Doku Zavgayev said his government has established contact with rebel forces and entered into talks with them in an attempt to free hostages they are holding.

He said there are several solutions to the problem and expressed the hope that it will be resolved.

Chechen rebels are holding 36 builders from the Stavropol region and Penza, 29 energy workers from Groznyy's heat and power plant and two members of the Chechen government, Minister of Education Yefim Gelman and Chairman of the Committee for Publishing, Printing and Book Trade Lechi Saligov.

Chechen Rebels Free Five Russian Policemen

LD2901184396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1837 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Moscow, January 29 (ITAR-TASS) — Five Russian policemen were freed by Chechen rebels on Monday, Russian television quoted its Dagestani correspondent as saying.

The policemen had been captured during a siege of the Dagestani village of Pervomayskoye where Chechen rebels holding 100 hostages were holed up by Russian security forces.

According to various reports, rebels are still holding seven to 12 policemen from the Russian city of Novosibirsk.

Russia: Further on Release of Novosibirsk Policemen

LD2901212496 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 2020 GMT 29 Jan 96

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] This Monday marked a week since the Dudayevite gunmen had promised to return the hostages captured in Pervomayskoye. The fate of five of the 17 Novosibirsk militiamen was determined today.

[Correspondent Dekabr Beybutov] Militia Colonel Akhmed Adiyev, authorized representative of the government, and Gadzhi Makhachev, leader of the Avar national movement, deputy of Dagestan's people's assembly, both representing Dagestan, held talks with Aslan Maskhadov. it was deemed their responsibility and that of all the Dagestanis to ensure that those released will return to their families in Novosibirsk and that no criminal proceedings will be instituted against them. On these conditions the Chechen side handed over the injured to the Dagestani representatives. They included Andrey Shishkin, Sergey Khomyakov, Vladimir Nashchokin, and Sergey Yurin. Eduard Semenov was the fifth person. Vasiliy Zhilotnov, militia major, was to have been released instead but he remained voluntarily together with 11 guys both as the oldest person in the group and deputy commander of the joint detachment.

[G. Makhachev, deputy of people's assembly of Dagestan] People's diplomacy is a great thing and a language which any people, public and the rest understand.

[I. Bartuyev; not further identified] I appeal to the Russian people, Russia, the defense minister and the Interior Ministry to exchange [us] as soon as possible, be it one for one or whatever. [video shows prisoners boarding a bus, young men in a room]

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Consultations on Hostage Release in Chechnya Resume Today

LD3001103696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0903 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Sergey Bazhenov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — Consultations in the Chechen village of Novogroznenskiy between representatives of Dagestan and Dudayev supporters on the mechanism of the release of the policemen from Siberia are to be resumed at 12.00 today. Akhmed Adiyev, head of the Interior Ministry Department of the city of Khasavyurt, and Aslan Maskhadov, chief of staff of Dudayev forces, will take part in them, Tazhitddin Batyrbiyev, head of the local administration of Khasavyurt, told TASS by telephone.

"Akhmed Adiyev is holding talks with Dudayev men on the instruction of the Dagestan government, and today he is expected to go alone to a meeting with Aslan Maskhadov for discussing further steps, aimed at releasing the Novosibirsk policemen. The meeting will last one hour," Batyrbiyev said.

He described the consultations with Dudayev supporters on the release of the Novosibirsk policemen as "difficult, but encouraging." He mentioned as an example the release of five policemen in the village of Novogroznenskiy last Monday.

All the released hostages are now staying at the Khasavyurt district police office, Adiyev told TASS. They were brought there at 19.45 on Monday.

"Four of the released policemen were lightly wounded, and the needed medical assistance was given to them in ambulatory conditions. There was no need to put them to hospital," Adiyev said.

Responding to the question about what made Aslan Maskhadov release those five policemen without any preliminary conditions, Adiyev said that "North Caucasian traditions helped us."

"I told Maskhadov: Aslan, you and your people injured our pride, the pride of the Dagestan nation, when you kidnapped our guests from the threshold of our house. The Novosibirsk policemen were kidnapped, when they were staying in our republic. The kidnapping of a guest is an insult to the host and the violation of Caucasian traditions," Adiyev continued.

Adiyev, 43, has been heading the Khasavyurt Interior Department for four years. Prior to that he was on the staff of the Dagestan Interior Ministry, the 6th Department. Now it is the Department for the Struggle Against Organized Crime. TASS found out that Adiyev had been dispatched to Khasavyurt by the management of the Dagestan Interior Ministry for improving the work of the city Interior Department as one of the most talented, mobile and reasonable officers on the Ministry's staff.

"Dagestan will tackle the problem of the release of the policemen, until it is fully resolved. The leadership of our republic are working hard on it and are ready to do all that depends on them for achieving the early release of the 12 policemen," Adiyev said.

According to Adiyev, one of the 12 policemen, a major, was lightly wounded. On Monday he refused to be released and said that he would remain in Novogroznenskiy until the last of his men was set free.

Russia: Ministry Has 'No Authority' To Exchange Chechen Bandits

LD2901154096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1500 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — The decision, if any, on the exchange of the Novosibirsk policemen taken hostage by Raduyev gunmen for the Salman Raduyev's militants captured in Pervomayskoye, Dagestan, should be taken at federal level, a high-ranking Russian Interior Ministry spokesman told INTERFAX on Monday.

"Our Ministry has no authority to release the bandits who are accused of crime," he said.

The delegation of Dagestani elders at the talks in the Chechen village of Novogroznensky does not intend to yield to the Dudayev side, which demands the exchange of the policemen for the captured Raduyev men, he said.

"According to mountain customs and laws, Novosibirsk policemen are guests of the Dagestani people. They came to help them. In addition, Salman Raduyev did not keep his promise to release all hostages captured on the territory of Dagestan," said the interior Ministry's spokesman.

Russia: Church Missionary Taken Hostage in Chechnya

LD2901180196 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1400 GMT 29 Jan 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Aleksandr Petrovskiy, head of the temporary directorate of the Chechen Interior Ministry, met Father Sergiy, a representative of Moscow patriarchate, in Groznyy on 27 January. Father Sergiy arrived in Chechnya on the patriarch's orders. The meeting discussed the mediatory role the church may

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play in searching for, and exchange of hostages held by rebels. The clergy received an official go-ahead to carry out their mission. The talks started today, but after talks with the head of a Dudayev formation in a Chechen region, Father Sergiy and Father Anatoliy, senior priest of a Groznyy church, were taken hostage.

[Begin Petrovskiy recording] We met Father Sergiy Zhigulin, an official of the external affairs department of Moscow patriarchate, who has come here on a noble mission, here on 27 January. He came with Father Anatoliy, who is the patriarch of Groznyy. Two days have passed and, despite his noble goals with which he has come here to mediate between us and bandit formations as regards exchanging POW's and hostages, Father Sergiy was himself taken hostage today. He was captured by the gunmen of Akhmed Zakayev in Urus-Martan. This is the evidence that they have lost their moral principles — those who are trying to destabilize the situation in the Chechen republic and obstruct the creation of conditions for peace on this land. [end recording]

Power Workers Held in Chechnya Reported 'Safe And Sound'

LD2901154396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1501 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — The Russian workers abducted from a power plant in Groznyy by Chechen rebels earlier this month are being held at a village close to the Chechen capital, representative of the Unified Energy System of Russia company Yuriy Dolin said Monday.

He said all of the 29 hostages were "safe and sound." Plant officials and the rebels continue talks on an exchange of the Russian workers for members of separatist units taken prisoner by federal troops. But the rebels kept on changing their terms. Their initial demand was for swapping one worker for one rebel. They later doubled their stake to one worker for two rebels, and now want prisoners on all sides to be exchanged according to a comprehensive list.

Dolin said Russian power plant workers continued to refrain from such actions as power supply cuts to Chechnya so as "not to make the life of ordinary people there difficult."

In the meantime, work on restoring the republic's energy sector is almost at a standstill after 80 percent of the Russian workforce has left Chechnya because of fears of being abducted and a lack of funding of the restoration work. He said. Worse still, most Russian experts who were to be sent to Chechnya have now refused to go there.

Military Activity

Kizlyar, Pervomayskoye: Less Than 153 Rebels Killed

LD2901172396 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1630 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 29 Jan (ITAR-TASS)— The identification of those killed in Kizlyar and Pervomayskoye has been completed. It has been established that the number of the fighters killed is smaller than supposed earlier. This was stated by Russian Procurator General Yuriy Skuratov at a news conference before his departure from Groznyy.

"The figure of 153 killed fighters will not be confirmed," he said, "there are not as many deaths as that." Skuratov has not said exactly how many fighters of the Raduyev gang was killed. It is difficult to reach the exact number since some of the bodies have been taken away and buried by the fighters.

The investigators have no death figures for civilians, Skuratov said. One militiaman was identified among those killed in Pervomayskoye, the procurator general said.

Speaking about the problem of hostages and those taken prisoner from among the Dudayev fighters, Skuratov admitted that "he is afraid to think how to resolve it," because there is no legal basis for an exchange.

Concerning the events in Kizlyar and Pervomayskoye, he said that the General Procuracy will charge specific individuals in the immediate future since "it has been difficult to identify concrete participants."

Criminal proceedings have been instituted against Shamil Basayev and Salman Raduyev, Skuratov said, and their cases are being investigated. He said Shamil Basayev is not only incriminated in the Budennovsk raid, but also in the seizure and hijacking of the passenger plane from Mineralnyye Vody to Yekaterinburg in 1991.

Two Security Officers Killed, Two Wounded in Chechnya

LD3001110696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1153 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Oleg Artyushin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]GROZNYY January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — Two security officers were killed and two wounded in Groznyy late on Monday when a car and a bus in which they were going were ambushed in the Staropromyslovskiy district of the city.

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Chief of staff of the Chechen Interior ministry, Colonel Akhmed Dakayev told TASS on Tuesday that unknown gunmen opened fire on the convoy with security officers close to 21:00 hours on Monday and that one of the killed officers was from Moscow.

At the same time there were no losses among Russian army and Interior troops in 20 Chechen attacks over the past 24 hours, Interior ministry spokesman Vasiliy Panchenkov told TASS on Tuesday.

He said Chechen militants opened fire on Russian positions 20 times, inlcuding 10 in Groznyy.

The separatists were mostly active near the settlements of Orekhovo, Stary Achkhoy, Gudermes, Zamai-yurt, Tukhchar and Akhar.

Panchenkov said the strongholds of the militants "were actively suppressed".

Russian Troops Arrest Eight Chechen Militants in Raduzhny

LD2901172496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1501 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — During the operation to comb the Raduzhny settlement in the Staropromyslovsky District of the Chechen capital Grozny, Russian interior troops units detained eight militants, and another one was killed during the exchange of fire, a spokesman for the Chechen interim interior department told INTERFAX on Monday.

Law-enforcement bodies received information that Dudayev militants were hiding in several houses in Raduzhny, according to the spokesman. At 10:00 a.m. Russian interior troops started combing the settlement. Not a single civilian suffered during the operation.

Russia: Skuratov Upset Over Conditions of Troops in Chechnya

LD2901200696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1927 GMT 29 Jan 96

[By Oleg Artyushin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, January 29 (ITAR-TASS) — Public Prosecutor Yuriy Skuratov said that he was very much upset by Russian troops upkeep in Chechnya. Before departing from Groznyy where he had been for an inspection tour, Skuratov promised to upbraid with [as received] ministers Pavel Grachev of defence and Anatoliy Kulikov of interior.

Skuratov told reporters that two checks had revealed "glaring facts," including cases of undernutrition, poor clothing and pediculosis. According to the prosecutor, the situation was more typical of interior troops than of troops in control of the Defence Ministry where service conditions were better.

He also said that part of funds earmarked for the troops' upkeep never reached their destination "being lost in transit." He referred to information obtained by his office.

"The Prosecutor's Office must actively protect rights of the Russian military serving under extreme conditions on the territory of the Chechen republic," he said.

He noted that he will have a "straight talk" with Grachev and Kulikov upon return from Chechnya.

Political Reaction

Russia Insists Turkey Try Chechen Hijackers as Terrorists

LD2901161996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1350 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — Russia's Foreign Ministry sent a telegram to the Russian Embassy in Ankara ordering Russian diplomats "to thoroughly" follow the situation concerning investigation of the case on the seizure of the Avrasya ferry-boat by Chechen separatist gunmen, a top-ranking official from Russia's Foreign Ministry told INTERFAX Monday.

He did not rule out the possibility that the Russian party may undertake a demarche if information that the Turkish authorities intend to accuse Chechen gunmen led by Muhammed Tokcan only of hindering freedom of navigation is confirmed.

"Avrasya's seizure is an example of international terrorism. It should be qualified only in this way. The attempts "to cut down" the term of imprisonment, to which the accused can be sentenced by artificial changes to the nature of the action committed by them are unacceptable."

With regard to other recent hostage-takers, the source said that the Russian authorities can demand to extradite Dudayev's accomplices, Salman Raduyev and Shamil Basayev, if they try to escape abroad.

"Raduyev and Basayev are Russian citizens who committed crimes on Russia's territory. That's why we can raise the issue on their extradition to the Russian authorities," the diplomat said.

He recognized that the situation can worsen if the country where Dudayev's gunmen may appear has no treaty on legal assistance on juridical issues with Russia.

"In this case appropriate Russian bodies will have to present incontestable testimonies of their guilt and

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confirm the fact for instituting criminal proceedings, etc.," the source said.

Nizhniy Novgorod: Petition on Chechnya Presented to Yeltsin

LD2901160796 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1400 GMT 29 Jan 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Nizhniy Novgorod Governor Boris Nemtsov today handed the Russian president 1 million signatures collected by his compatriots demanding an immediate end to the Chechen war. To be more precise, the head of state got not the signatures themselves but a certificate by the local archive proving that they have been taken to be kept forever. The main point of the event is not the technical aspect, of course.

[Begin Nemtsov recording] I informed the president that 1 million signatures have been collected in Nizhniy Novgorod Region. He said he understands the importance of the signatures for him and that he will spare no effort to try to put an end to the war.

The only thing I would personally like to ask everyone is to collect similar signatures throughout Russia. This is very important for making the president make the decision. [end recording]

[Correspondent] The signatures have been collected. But now it is a question of how to end the war.

[Begin Nemtsov recording] You see, this is a matter for the supreme commander, after all, not for a provincial governor. I think Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin] enjoys enough powers and means to end the war as soon as possible. This is very important for the whole country. Chechnya must not be a bleeding wound for that long. [end recording]

[Correspondent] Boris Nemtsov said some presidential officials were not enthusiastic about his initiative, as was made clear to him before the meeting in the Kremlin. The president himself, however, did not refuse to read some of the letters addressed to him by the people of Nizhniy Novgorod. Well, the book of letters did not make the president happy. But, as any book, it is a source of knowledge.

Russia: OSCE Chief Says Chechen Rapprochement 'Unlikely'

LD2901134096 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1100 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tim Guldimann, head of the OSCE mission in Groznyy, today met with journalists in Groznyy. Our special Chechnya correspondent Vladimir Trushkovskiy has the details:

[Trushkovskiy] Tim Guldimann said at the meeting that in the opinion of the OSCE mission the situation in the republic has significantly worsened. As you understand, this is linked to the events in Kizlyar, Pervomayskoye, and the situation which came about in Gudermes after the December events. Tim Guldimann said that the OSCE mission will continue to work in accordance with its current mandate and seek contacts with all political and military leaders of the republic in order for the sides to reach mutual understanding.

May I remind you that the mission's authority was somewhat shaken at the end of last year because OSCE representatives left the republic during the election period. Nevertheless, Guldimann said that the mission believed and still believes — and it published its opinion in a special declaration — that the elections in the republic were not free. Strange as it may seem, Tim Guldimann said that the elections are in the past and that he does not rule out the possibility of establishing contacts with Doku Zavgayev, the head of the republic who was elected in December. Guldimann also said that neither the federal side nor Dudayev's side have made any official claims to the mission.

Touching upon the subject of the resumption of peace talks, Guldimann said that, given the current situation, he thinks that any rapprochement between the sides is unlikely. He believes that he and his colleagues will continue to seek a compromise in reaching a peaceful settlement.

Russia: Chechen OMON Handling Militia, Political Tasks

LD2901215096 Moscow NTV in Russian 1900 GMT 29 Jan 96

[Video report by unidentified correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] In Chechnya, against the background of a large number of people in military uniform, there is a subunit which many people know about, but which is little talked about — the Chechen Special Purpose Militia Detachment [OMON]. Since this is a reserve unit of the Chechnya Internal Affairs Ministry, one needs special permission to film these men. The men in the detachment, who have gone through a special selection process, are not engaged exclusively only on militia operations but sometimes, according to the detachment commander, they have to assume a number of political functions as well. [video shows militia buildings, OMON members in action and on vehicles]

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[Unidentified commander] We go into the areas where illegal armed formations are concentrated, hold negotiations with them and try to reach mutual accord. Our goal is not to destroy but to reach accord with these people so they can return to civilian life and start living normally.

[Correspondent] However, pretty ordinary arrests sometimes have to be carried out, too. It looks like this. [video shows man being detained in a yard and bundled into a vehicle]

Given the somewhat complex psychology of the Chechens and the state the republic is in at the moment, before joining the detachment a man has to talk to the political officer before joining. The latter tries to establish how reliable the new man is, although he understands that one can only really find out everything in an extreme situation. Nevertheless, the novice is told immediately about one essential condition.

[Unidentified officer] An order from the commander is law: fulfillment of the commanding officer's order without question, that is the main thing.

[Correspondent] These people somewhat resemble characters from a story about the civil war. Nearly all of them have only recently donned military uniform. The political officer, for instance, graduated from the Faculty of History at Groznyy University.

[Unidentified political officer] In the final analysis, everybody is sick of what is going on here. I have never worked in the militia. The majority of the men, 99 percent, have never worked in the militia. It was the situation that forced them into it.

Yeltsin Edict on Chechen Republic Restoration Published

MM2901151096 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 27 Jan 96 p 7

[Russian Federation Presidential Edict No. 86 dated 24 January 1996 and signed by Russian Federation President B. Yeltsin: "On Measures To Restore the Chechen Republic Economy and Social Sphere in 1996"]

[FBIS Translated Text] To implement measures to restore the Chechen Republic economy and social sphere of the in 1996 I decree:

1. The Russian Federation Government is to approve within a two-week period under the prescribed procedure a Federal Targeted Program for the restoration of the economy and social sphere of the Chechen Republic for 1996 proceeding from an expenditure level of 16.2 trillion rubles [R] from all sources of funding and up to 1 billion U.S. dollars received via foreign credits.

2. The Russian Federation Government is to:

include the Federal Targeted Program for the Restoration of the Chechen Republic Economy and Social Sphere for 1996 in the list of federal targeted programs proposed for implementation in 1996 within the limits of federal budget expenditure when submitting them to the State Duma of the Federal Assembly;

make provision in the Federal Investment Program for 1996 submitted for approval by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly for the funding of measures linked to the implementation of the said program in the sum of R4.0 trillion, including up to R1.5 trillion for the construction of new and restoration of destroyed housing and the issuing of housing subsidies and certificates;

channel an additional R0.555 trillion, over and above the sum envisaged by the 1996 federal budget, into the restoration of Chechen Republic road facilities out of redistributed funds envisaged by the federal budget for the maintenance, repair, modernization, and construction of federal roads and other centralized measures;

channel funds from the Russian Federation Government Reserve Fund for the Prevention and Elimination of Emergencies and the Consequences of Natural Disasters into the payment of nonreturnable loans for citizens leaving the Chechen Republic to the sum of R0.2 trillion;

jointly with the RAO YEES [Unified Energy System Joint-Stock Company] of Russia ensure the funding of Chechen Republic electricity generating facilities to the sum of R0.3 trillion.

3. Federal organs of executive power are to ensure the financing of the expenditure which the Federal Program for the Restoration of the Chechen Republic Economy and Social Sphere stipulates for the current maintenance of facilities being restored and the acquisition of equipment out of and within the limits of the appropriations prescribed by the 1996 federal budget for the corresponding ministries and departments up to R5.0 trillion.

4. The Russian Federation Government is to approve in accordance with the prescribed procedure by 1 February 1994 a special program to provide with facilities, maintain, and equip internal affairs troops and organs in the Chechen Republic, with the finance to be provided over and above the Federal Targeted Program for the Restoration of the Chechen Republic Economy and Social Sphere.

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5. The State Commission for the Restoration of the Chechen Republic Economy and Social Sphere (O.N. Soskovets) is to approve a timetable for the financing of the Federal Targeted Program for the restoration of the Chechen Republic Economy and Social Sphere for 1996 and report monthly on the progress of its implementation.

6. Monitoring of the fulfillment of thins edict is to be the responsibility of O.I. Lobov, plenipotentiary representative of the Russian Federation president in the Chechen Republic.

7. This edict comes into force from the day it is published.

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CIS: ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 30 Jan

LD3001071496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0622 GMT 30 Jan 96

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — Russian newspapers have responded to the news about the death of outstanding Russian poet Iosif Brodskiy. IZVESTIYA and KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA frontpaged an obituary notice.

IZVESTIYA believes that the passing of Iosif Brodskiy has "brought to an end an era in Russian and world poetry". Poet Konstantin Kedrov has remarked in response to the sad news from America that "a whole era has ended in the life of the country — the era of Iosif Brodskiy who has become a recognised poet of world renown".

IZVESTIYA on the state of affairs as regards the payment or non-payment of wages in Russia.

Wage arrears at industrial enterprises in the country totalled 13,400,000 million roubles as a result of last year. The authorities have resorted to hasty measures in individual sectors of the economy to relieve strain, comments Irina Savvateyeva.

"Those hasty measures produce no result. The stresses and strain continue to swell in the social situation at an accelerated pace," Savvateyeva pointed out.

Aleksandr Kislov, the newspaper's correspondent in Saratov Region, describes in his dispatch the causes of wage arrears at a number of Saratov factories.

ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI on wage payment delays.

"People should get what they have earned through their labour," the newspaper points out. Dispatches by the newspaper's correspondents in Novgorod, Nizhniy Novgorod, Rostov on Don, and Yaroslavl, deal with efforts to find out the causes why the payment of social benefits is delayed in the regions.

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA on the forthcoming Presidential election.

The entire history of Russia has been connected with the improvement of the model of personal power which personified the Centre, the top of State structure throughout the vast territory, writes news analyst Yuriy Vasilkov.

"Nowadays the point is not in whether we shall elect a 'gentleman' or a 'comrade'. The President is to us the Head of State regardless of his political sympathies prior to election. He assumes responsibility to the entire history of Great Russia," the journalist emphasises.

IZVESTIYA dismisses readers' reproaches that the newspaper has grown oppositional to the President and the government.

The newspaper's political analyst Otto Latsis formulates the newspaper's position at the current stage of history: "No, we have not turned oppositional to the policy of reforms, but we are worried about the fact that the President's entourage urges him to take up an attitude opposite to what Yeltsin adhered to previously.

"Russia has no future without democratic and market reforms. But what one should do if the captain of the ship Russia turned his back on those co-citizens who brought him to the captain's bridge?"

TRUD on government resolutions aimed at reasserting State monopoly on vodka production.

Olga Parfenova, a commentator, takes a positive view of a number of government resolutions connected with government efforts to reassert State monopoly on vodka production and to augment revenue to the treasury resultant of vodka sales.

In the light of the demonopolisation of the production of alchololic drinks, the State budget had an annual shortfall of 40-50 trillion roubles since 1992, Parfenova writes.

SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA on the nuclear power industry problem.

The newspaper warns that "it is essential to work out a clear-cut and rational policy in the development of the nuclear power industry, which in the hands of misguided politicians may become a lever to scare the people."

"Can it so happen that we would become hostages of nuclear energy in the near future?" the newspaper asks.

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA on arbitrary practices in Chechnya.

Viktor Sokirko, in a commentary headlined "Funds get stolen, while hostages are not handed back", describes current arbitrary practices in Chechnya.

The newspaper quotes Russia's Prosecutor-General Yuriy Skuratov as saying recently that the funds which are assigned from the Federal budget for the rehabilitation of the war-ravaged economy of Chechnya get stolen by the billion.

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Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission To Implement Previous Accords

LD2901193496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1848 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] WASHINGTON, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — Russia expects the 6th session of the U.S.-Russian commission for economic and technological cooperation to make decisions on the practical implementation of earlier bilateral accords, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin told the session opening in Washington Monday.

"It is much easier to negotiate common principles of relations; what we need now is to convert accords into practice," Chernomyrdin stated.

The Chernomyrdin-Gore commission will work out practical decisions on a number of pressing issues concerning bilateral economic relations, Chernomyrdin is convinced.

Bilateral turnover has risen considerably in recent years, Chernomyrdin noted with satisfaction. According to preliminary calculations, it increased by 25 percent to $7 billion in 1995, he added. "U.S. companies are leading by the total volume of investments in Russia's economy," he underlined.

Commenting on mutual access to domestic markets, Chernomyrdin noted that "consistently standing for its own interests, the United States treats Russia's concerns in this area with reluctance."

Speaking on the internal political situation in Russia, Chernomyrdin underlined the Russian leadership's commitment to democratic and market reforms.

"The December elections showed that the course toward the renewal of society is in no doubt," Chernomyrdin said. "Democratic and market reforms will continue," he said. At the same time, mistakes made in the reform process will be adjusted, he added. "Above all, this applies to the social policy," he remarked.

The U.S. commission co-chairman, Vice President Albert Gore, said the commission "helped to establish a healthy and open cooperation ambience which makes the creation of new jobs possible both in the United States and Russia."

Gore urged "not to give in to forces which may separate us." "We need to move forward together on the path of freedom, democracy and market reforms," he added.

Agreement 'Close' at Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission

LD2901132296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1135 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] WASHINGTON, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — Russia and U.S. are close to signing a number of important accords at the 6th session of the Russian-American Commission on Scientific and Technological Cooperation, known as the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission, opening in Washington Monday, a senior Russian delegation official has told INTERFAX.

"Certain optimism" was inspired at the talks that got under way in working group last Friday as part of preparation for the session, the source said, adding that Americans "are ready to meet us half way" on lifting the ban on the sale of Russian hunting guns in U.S.

Chances are "very high" that a decision will be adopted on U.S. participation in tapping the Timano-Pechorski oil field, Anatoliy Shatalov, deputy fuel and energy minister has said, foreseeing that as part of this project a pipeline will be laid to haul oil from the Timano-Pechorski field to Russia's ports on the Baltic Sea. About $3 million are to be set aside for "a Baltic transportation system," Shatalov said.

Voicing pleasure with bilateral space studies, Yuriy Koptev, director of Russia's Space Agency, has forecast the signing at the session of documents on further joint research aboard the Mir orbital station, on Russian-American piloted flights, and on the use of an American space shuttle for putting Russian communication satellites into orbit, which, by Koptev's estimate, will save Russia about five launches of one-time boosters a year. The session is also expected to announce that a spacecraft, designed through combined efforts, will fly to Mars as part of a Mars-96 program next October.

"All indications are that the U.S. side is ready to accept Russia's request to increase its quota of commercial launches of space probes with American components from 8 to 20 times a year," a source has said.

A U.S. corporation on private investments abroad will provide $500 million for conversion programs in Russia, a Russian delegate predicted.

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Chernomyrdin: Russian Reform Policy 'Will Not Change'

LD2901212996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2119 GMT 29 Jan 96

[By Igor Borisenko and Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] WASHINGTON, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin assured the U.S. Administration on Monday that Russia will not backtrack from the policy of reform.

"The policy of reform in Russia will not change," Chernomyrdin said at the 6th session of the Russian-U.S. Commission on Economic and Technological Cooperation that opened in Washington on Monday.

"Considering that the session is being held in a year when the two countries will be electing their presidents, I would like to caution you against rumours about a possible change of Moscow's economic policy," he said.

"The December elections in Russia have shown that despite all difficulties the policy of renovation remains beyond doubt. Democratic market transformations will continue. Excesses will be rectified and the necessary adjustments will be made, especially in the social sphere. This is not just the only possible, but the only acceptable path and we will not sidetrack from it," the premier said.

Speaking about the commission's work in the next few days, Chernomyrdin noted that "we must firm up our earlier understanding on major issues."

Chernomyrdin said that "the session will focus on extremely important issues of cooperation" and suggested concentrating both sides' efforts on the "analysis of failures which Russian and American partners made during the implementation of the earlier signed agreement on partnership for economic progress."

Among the top priority issues to be discussed the premier named the need to grant broader access for Russain goods to the U.S. market.

"Up to now we have felt a cool attitude on the part of the American side towards our aspiration to become equal trade partners," he said

"But without identifying the reasons for such an attitude it is impossible to report the essence of our disagreements to our presidents," he pointed out.

He noted that "the idea of commercial partnership with the U.S. has taken root in Russia. Trade turnover between our countries has increased by 25 percent and reached about seven billion U.S. dollars."

At the same time, the Russian premier noted that there are many unresolved problems in bilateral relations, particularly pointing to the fact that the U.S. sometimes does not take seriously Russia's concerns about a number of trade problems.

He expressed the hope that the 6th session will be held in a "constructive and business-like atmosphere."

U.S. Vice-President Al Gore, the American co-chairman of the commission, stressed that the commission will seek to use real opportunities in bilateral relations in order to build a bridge from the Cold War era to a better and more prosperous future.

On Monday, the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission is due to work in the committees for the environment, public health service, trade and investments, business cooperation and power engineering.

The committees for conversion, agriculture, science and technology, space exploration, and a group dealing with issues of taxation will hold their sessions on Tuesday.

Russia: U.S. Seeking To Get Russia Ties 'Out of Rut'

MM3001101496 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 3

[Report by Vladimir Shelkov: "Premier Arriving..."]

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 29 Jan — Russian Federation Premier V. Chernomyrdin arrived yesterday evening on a three-day visit to the United States. He was met at the American capital's Andrews Air Force Base by U.S. Vice President A. Gore. The Russian premier's program, which begins today, includes his participation in the sixth session of the bilateral Commission for Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation — the so-called Gore-Chernomyrdin commission — and meetings with representatives of America's business and financial elite.

In the days directly preceding the visit the U.S. Administration has been taking steps to get our bilateral relations out of the rut they have been in for the past few months. At U.S. President B. Clinton's initiative, he held a telephone conversation with B. Yeltsin. During this conversation, administration spokesmen claim, Clinton "called in friendly but frank terms for an end to the war in Chechnya and a continuation of the reform process."

According to information from the same sources, the U.S. President told his Russian counterpart that the United States is concerned about the methods which were used to tackle the recent hostage incident. The White House press secretary told journalists that Yeltsin

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assured Clinton "that he firmly adheres not only to the economic reform process but also to the continuation of U.S.-Russian partnership and the development of relations."

Responding to criticism from specialists in the sphere of bilateral ties who have been accusing the administration of a lack of attention to Russia in U.S. foreign policy, the White House incumbent did not restrict himself to talking with the Kremlin incumbent. He convened his main aides the other day for a conference specially devoted to these issues. Judging by the list of administration figures invited to this discussion — the secretary of state, the defense, treasury, commerce, and energy secretaries, the CIA director, the White House chief of staff, the U.S. representative at the United Nations, and the chief of the General Staff — it was a very serious discussion. But, a White House spokesman who wished to remain anonymous claims, it mainly summed up what had been achieved already rather than mapping out a strategy for the future.

Incidentally, it is easy to understand the U.S. Administration. It would hardly be sensible now — a few months before the presidential election in Russia — to draw any conclusion about the nature of future relations or to voice unconditional support for a certain politician. Consequently, it is quite obvious that people will try to use Chernomyrdin's visit to the United States primarily to further clarify the picture of events in Russia.

Russia: 'Wrong Reading' by U.S. on Primakov-Christopher Meeting

LD2901190396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1737 GMT 29 Jan 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature: by diplomatic correspondents Aleksandr Korzun, Igor Porshnev, Yevgeniy Terekhov, and others]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — The U.S. department of State "surprised" the Russian Foreign Ministry by its wrong reading of agreement on a meeting between the Russian and U.S. foreign policy chiefs Yevgeniy Primakov and Warren Christopher, Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin said Saturday in an interview with INTERFAX.

The U.S. Department of State maintains that President Yeltsin invited Secretary Christopher to pay a visit to Moscow.

It is only his Russian counterpart who can invite the U.S. Secretary of State to Moscow, and invite Secretary Christopher to Moscow is what Primakov really did, according to Karasin.

In addition, the United States offered inaccurate information on an upcoming meeting between Primakov and Christopher.

Primakov and Christopher did agree to hold a working meeting in Finland on February 10 and 11, Karasin said, but instead of meeting in Helsinki, they would prefer to meet "in a quieter place, which will make it possible for them to sidestep protocol events and concentrate on business."

Only after their meeting in Finland, according to Karasin, Christopher will be expected to pay an official visit to Moscow. He is likely to visit the Russian capital, on invitation from Primakov, in March.

SACEUR Remarks to Russian General Staff Audience Reported

MM3001110196 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Aleksandr Krasulin: "How Our Correspondent Pursued the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, and What General G. Joulwan Replied to Him"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "As a leader of the future Europe, Moscow must use the unique opportunity that has been opened up to establish a new European security system. In this future Europe the military forces of Russia and NATO will work together for peace and stability on the continent. This meeting with you, Russia's future military chiefs, is very important to me, since you will not only command troops but will also advise politicians on the use of military force."

This was how General Joulwan began his lecture to the students and teaching staff of the General Staff Academy. Later he declared: "I place emphasis on students' questions. I will be extremely frank, and I expect the same of you." But in fact no time was left for questions.

The general sees the implementation of the Partnership for Peace program as the basis for Russia's cooperation with NATO. On this plane he rated very highly the Russian military's participation in operations in Bosnia, where, he said, the NATO armed forces and the Russian contingent are working under the motto "One team — one task."

At the same time the general pointed out with regret that today he and his colleagues in Washington and Brussels are most concerned at the suspicious attitude toward NATO which exists in Russia.

"We seek cooperation, not confrontation," he tried to persuade the audience. "There are no grounds today to fear and mistrust NATO. The North Atlantic alliance is

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no longer what it used to be. In qualitative terms it has become weaker."

In confirmation of his words the general displayed several diagrams, according to which the number of NATO servicemen in Europe has been halved compared with the Cold War period, while combat readiness has increased from 12 hours to several days.

"We are striving for a united Europe," he pointed out. He illustrated that desire graphically, showing two charts. On the first, most of Europe from the Czech Republic to the Urals was colored red (the Warsaw Pact countries). To the left of this huge area the NATO countries were like a small blue patch clinging on. "But we want it to be like this!" he said and showed another slide, on which all of Europe was colored blue.

The audience reacted to the slides with a tense silence, while a representative of the academy seated next to me quietly remarked: "Aha! It was ours, and now it is yours."

On the question of admitting new members to the North Atlantic alliance, the commander pointed out that "the enlargement of NATO is a political question and will be decided by politicians." In his opinion, however, this will take many years.

But the main emphasis in the lecture was placed on the fact that NATO will be the basis for strengthening the system of security and cooperation in Europe. On this question, to all appearances, the general was expressing the opinion of the Americans. ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA's correspondent managed to exchange opinions on this problem with other representatives of NATO countries present at the meeting. One of them, who asked me not to name him, said that his country was activating cooperation within NATO in order to "transform this organization from a tool of confrontation into an institution of cooperation." In his opinion, a North Atlantic alliance of a quite different nature must be the basis for strengthening security in Europe.

Taking his cue from that different interpretation, ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA's correspondent formulated his question for the guest. I managed to intercept the commander in chief only on his way to his car.

"Taking into account the fact that your lecture mainly emphasized NATO's new functions in carrying out humanitarian operations, would it not be better to transform the alliance's military organization into some international European administration for emergency situations, keeping the implementation of peacekeeping operations as one of the main areas?"

The general stopped and gave a clear-cut, military-style reply: "The alliance's functions should not be restricted. NATO must be an all-round organization. Its tasks should not be defined so narrowly. The maximum number of functions must be preserved."

That reply showed in practice that his almost hour-long talk saying that NATO intends to effect a switch in its actions mainly to operations of a humanitarian nature was no more than pastoral illustrations on the rigid military framework of a seemingly defensive alliance.

Weather Delays Russian Paratroopers Flight to Bosnia

LD2901173296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1506 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — Due to adverse weather conditions the operation on the transportation of the last group of Russian paratroopers to Bosnia was postponed till Tuesday, Col. Gen. Yevgeniy Podkolzin, commander of Russia's Airborne forces, told INTERFAX.

"If the weather is good, four military transport aircraft with the last group of Russian paratroopers aboard will take off from the aerodrome in Ivanovo and fly to Bosnia tomorrow," Podkolzin said.

The strength of the Russian independent air-borne brigade which will participate in the operation of multinational forces implementing the Dayton peace agreements on Bosnia numbers 1500 people, he said.

"Railway transportation of military equipment from Russia to Bosnia has been practically concluded. The last train left the station of Chop today."

There will be 62 armored airborne vehicles, 29 armored personnel carriers, four BTR-ZD fighting vehicles, eight NONA self-propelled artillery guns, portable air-defense systems and 310 cars at the disposal of Russian airborne troopers in Bosnia.

The Russian contingent is stationed in the eastern part of the Posavinsky corridor (Bosnia) which is in control of Serbs.

"I shall fly to the region where the Russian airborne brigade is stationed on February 2. Defense Minister Pavel Grachev is also expected to come to Bosnia," Podkolzin said.

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Russia: Zyuganov: NATO Enlargement Threatens START II Ratification

LD2901155596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1350 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — NATO's possible enlargement arouses doubts concerning international agreements on reduction of conventional arms and the Russian-American START-2 Treaty and prospects of its ratification in the Russian State Duma, Communist Party faction leader Gennadiy Zyuganov told INTERFAX Monday commenting on the ratification of the START-2 Treaty by the American Senate.

"These are interrelated issues. If one speaks about NATO's enlargement then it is necessary to sum up all conventional arms in those countries which will join the alliance," Zyuganov said.

NATO's enlargement, he said, "violates the balance of conventional forces, destroys the achieved agreements and raises the issue of how to compensate for this."

According to Zyuganov, he has already commissioned experts of the Communist Party on military political and strategic issues "to attentively examine and research" all aspects related to ratification of the START-2 Treaty. The faction will determine its position for considering the issue on the ratification of the START-2 Treaty in the State Duma only after this report is ready.

Zyuganov said that he is "an ardent supporter of the following idea: our planet will not endure a new round of the arms race as it is overloaded with lethal arms; it's time to make conclusions."

Russian Official Recommends START-II Ratification

LD2901131996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1218 GMT 29 Jan 96

[y Anatoliy Yurkin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 29 (ITAR-TASS) — Analytical work should precede ratification of the Russian-American START-2 Teaty, claimed on Monday Major-General Nikolay Bezborodov, deputy chairman of the State Duma (Russian parliament lower house) Defence Committee. He reported that members of the recently elected Duma will start studying the document over the next few days.

The general stressed in an interview with ITAR-TASS which he gave in connection with the ratification of this treaty by the U.S. Senate last Friday that the ratification of the document by the Russian parliament "should be based on verified calculations, on the positions of Russia's geopolitical interests, but the legislature should also take into account economic capabilties of the country."

According to the general, financing of defence expenditures "is conducted at a minimum level, while huge funds are necessary for the maintenance of strategic nuclear forces."

Bezborodov stressed at the same time that deep cuts into the strategic nuclear arsenals of the two great powers, provided for by the START-2 Treaty which was signed by Boris Yeltsin and George Bush on January 3, 1993, "meets the interests of our country".

In compliance with provisions of the treaty, Russia and the United States may have 3,000-3,500 nuclear warheads each by the year 2003. The treaty provides for stopping completely the production of land-based MIRVed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) by January 1, 2003 and for limiting the number of warheads on submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

Besides, Russia agrees to destroy its 154 "heavy" ICBMs (SS-18 according to the U.S. classification), capable of carrying ten nuclear reentry vehicles each.

Russia: Primakov Welcomes U.S. Ratification of START II

LD2901190296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1737 GMT 29 Jan 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov welcomed the ratification of the START-2 treaty by the U.S. Senate.

"It is gratifying that the document was ratified without amendments," he told a press conference in Moscow Saturday. The press conference focused on his talks with his German counterpart, Klaus Kinkel.

"This opens a possibility for Russia's State Duma to ratify the treaty," Primakov said.

"The public had serious fears that U.S. legislators would ratify the START-2 with serious amendments which would mean a step back from the treaty on anti-missile defense," Primakov said. "Fortunately, it did not happen," he added.

"German Chancellor Helmut Kohl will arrive in Moscow in the near future," Primakov said. "The Russian Foreign Ministry is already working on the preparation of this visit," he added.

According to Primakov, the relations with Germany are of special importance for Russia. "They balance

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European and global trends, promote stability and stop all those who would like to see the world monopolar," he added.

"No country, be it Russia, Germany or the United States, is entitled to put forward conditions to other countries," Primakov stated.

Russia and Germany agree on many issues, Primakov said. "For instance, both Russia and Germany are highly interested in the settlement in the Balkans and further steps to settle the Yugoslavia crisis," he added.

Primakov underlined that Germany recognized Russia's special role in conflict settlement within the CIS. "Without Russia playing this role, these conflicts are just impossible to settle," he said.

In answer to an INTERFAX question, Primakov said he left for Dushanbe Sunday to look into the situation in Tajikistan. "It is necessary to increase Russia's role in the settlement of the conflict in the republic, considering that the talks between the government and opposition will resume soon," he remarked.

For his part, Kinkel said Germany would like to maintain partnership with Russia. "Sometimes we differ, but this happens among friends as well," he added.

Kinkel said he had discussed the Chechnya issue with Primakov and learned much new information. "First of all, this applies to the history of the conflict," he added.

In addition, Kinkel hoped the issue of "trophy arts" will soon be solved.

For his part, Primakov agreed that the restitution issue does exist. "This is a bilateral issues and should be tackled bilaterally," he said.

Primakov said Kinkel had invited him to visit Germany. "I gladly accepted the invitation. In addition, we agreed to exchange telephone calls," he added.

Primakov recalled that both him and Kinkel had been the first civilian persons to head their countries' intelligence services. "It seems that we knew each other by default. However, today's tete-a-tete meeting was first and quite successful," he added.

For his part, Russian President Boris Yeltsin said "our positions [with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl] match on virtually every issues, maybe except for the NATO issue." He met with Kinkel later the same afternoon.

"If we could consider you as ally in the NATO enlargement issue, it would be great, and you would not have to throw away dozens million dollars on this [the NATO enlargement]," he added.

Yeltsin Backs Group for Joint Anti-Terrorism With G-7

LD3001113496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1007 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — President Boris Yeltsin backed the proposal to create a "working group" under the auspices of the foreign ministry which would coordinate anti-terrorist activities with G-7 countries, his spokesman Sergey Medvedev told reporters on Tuesday.

The new group will "first and foremost improve the organisational part of the work", Medvedev said adding that the group would involve representatives of the federal security service, the foreign intelligence service and would be run by the foreign ministry.

Medvedev said the leaders of foreign, interior and security ministries of the G-7 and Russia held a meeting last December in Canada to discuss the fight against terrorism. The final document envisaged a bigger exchange of information, joint work to avert the use of chemical, bacteriological and nuclear weapons by terrorists, the fight against hostage-takings and against free travel of terrorists across the territories of the respective countries.

"It is very important that the document reflected the growing danger of internal terrorism. In particular, besides the explosion in Oklahoma and the gas attack in the Tokyo subway the document also mentioned the hostage drama in Budennovsk last June", Medvedev said.

The G-7 countries are interested in an active cooperation with Russia in anti-terrorist activities, the spokesman said.

Russia Seen as 'Tired of Being Lectured' by West

MM2901150496 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 27 Jan 96 p 2

[Article by observer Aleksandr Golts under the "Topic of the Week" rubric: "Russia Is Tired of Being Lectured"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The past week was almost a good one by Russian standards. The terrorists Basayev and Raduyev did not seize any more cities, and even let a few hostages go. The gangsters wanted by Russia's special services confined themselves to holding a press conference during which they notified the world public of their intention of getting as far as Moscow and Voronezh. And a number of the country's liberals,

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believing that the Kremlin is trying to resolve the Chechen problem unconstitutionally and too brutally, left the Presidential Council, also informing all the mass media of this.

The Moscow foreign policy elite was meanwhile busy with an exceptionally important guessing game: whether or not Russia would be admitted to the Council of Europe, an organization whose doors it has been knocking on persistently ever since 1992. Let me remind you that this is a really prestigious forum of representatives of European states whose goal is the strengthening of democratic institutions and the observance of human rights. During that time the Baltic states, Ukraine, and Moldova have been admitted to the Council of Europe. We, on the other hand, have had periodic visits from numerous delegations of experts who have shaken their heads gloomily: No, the country does not meet the high European criteria.

This time it all seemed even more bizarre. Judging from press reports, a number of the participants in the present session of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly kindly agreed to vote for Russia's admission, while demanding at the same time that it take on an endless number of commitments.

In my view, this torrent of sermons and stipulations considerably "eroded" the undoubted positive significance of the fact that the assembly eventually approved Russia's admission to the Council of Europe.

Observing all this fuss, at one point I caught myself thinking that it has all become extremely boring. In the past few years Russia, like an over-age schoolchild having to repeat a grade, has been trying to pass endless additional exams and re-examinations. Every time, they assure us that "as soon as we have joined" this or that international organization — G-7, the IMF, the WTO [World Trade Organization], the IBRD [International Bank for Reconstruction and Development], APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation], and the Council of Europe, not to mention the ABCDE and the FGHIJ — we will finally have joined the famous "club of civilized states." And every time, conditions and demands have been put forward. Every time, Russia, standing on tiptoe, has tried to prove that it is very, very civilized and perfectly "compatible."

However, even after the longed-for chair, or rather footstool, was finally received, it became clear that we are who we are, irrespective of our presence in or absence from a specific organization. Indeed, I realize now that those self-same "civilized states" were setting more and more new conditions and criteria in order to disguise their own inability really to help Russia on its genuinely difficult path of reforms. They were disguising their selfishness.

Sorrowful and reproachful sighs have recently been increasingly audible among our partners, first and foremost the United States. Russia has, they say, failed to justify the hopes pinned on it. It is going to deviate from the path of reform any moment now. Secretary of State Christopher notes: Recent events show that the Russian reforms are under threat. And he instructs (or maybe warns) us: Russia's integration with the West depends on its will to comply with international norms and remain on the path of reforms.

Judging from press reports, the West was particularly alarmed by the resignations of Kozyrev, Chubays, and a number of others. Here Western politicians are stubbornly pretending not to understand an obvious fact. Namely: that those who were forced to go were those who romantically believed (or claimed to believe) in the West's sincerity. Those who assured all of us that we only had to fulfill the concrete conditions, and real economic cooperation would begin, which would give the country the opportunity to clamber out of poverty. Those who relayed endless and, as it turned out, totally empty promises: of 20, 40, or however many billions of dollars in aid.

I do not want to be misunderstood. Russia should be present at all international forums. It should be a permanent partner of the leading world powers. And in this connection the approval expressed by the Russian president for the decision of the Council of Europe Assembly is understandable. But our participation in world affairs is not only — not even mainly — Russia's problem. Now, as was the case four years ago, everyone should realize that in terms of economic and political development, the state of the democratic institutions, and respect for the individual citizen's rights (based first and foremost on ensuring his personal safety), we are not going to be like the Netherlands or Norway for a while yet. But does that give anyone the right to treat Russia like a slow-witted and mischievous child? Even children eventually get tired of endlessly being lectured. And my country is certainly a grown-up. With a very hard life and a highly complex character. Who is, apparently, tired of being lectured. Today she is inclined to heed those Russian figures who promise to restore her lost self-respect (whether they are lying or not is another matter).

The countries that so carefully guard the purity of their "closed clubs" should first ask themselves: Will their activity be effective in the absence of Russia? Those who are once again adopting the pose of stern and dispassionate judge of our reforms should clearly do

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some thinking. Not necessarily about Russia's fate, of course. About their own losses in the event that these reforms do not end in success.

But attempts to shift all the responsibility for what is happening in Russia onto the outside world also seem to be a manifestation of childishness. We ourselves are responsible for our mistakes, for our inconsistency, for the ambition, selfishness, and hypocrisy of the politicians we elect. But if Russia's partners will not or cannot help, they had better refrain from displaying their own selfishness and hypocrisy. The situation is difficult enough without that.

Bulgarian President Congratulates Yeltsin on CE Decision

LD2901174696 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1644 GMT 29 Jan 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Vladimir Abrosimov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sofia, 29 Jan (ITAR-TASS) — Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin has been congratulated by his Bulgarian counterpart Zhelyu Zhelev on Russia being accepted into the Council of Europe. The latter did this during a telephone conversation which took place today, the press service of the country's president reported. Bulgaria welcomes the Council of Europe's decision as "a step in the direction of Russia joining the institutions which lead to European values and democracy." Z. Zhelev expressed confidence that this would serve as "a guarantee of the further democratization of Russia."

The head of the Bulgarian state thanked the Russian president for permitting by decree the supply of 100 tanks and 100 infantry fighting vehicles for the Bulgarian armed forces.

In conclusion, he said he was convinced that "Bulgarian-Russian relations will continue to develop irrespective of the polictical situation since they are based on rich historical traditions."

Yeltsin, Bulgarian President Discuss Bilateral Relations

LD2901172296 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1642 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 29 Jan (ITAR-TASS) — The recent period in the development of Russo-Bulgarian relations is characterized by them becoming more active in various spheres, it was noted in a telephone conversation which took place today between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Bulgarian President Zhelyu Zhelev, ITAR-TASS was told by the head of state's press service.

Both sides intend to make efforts toward more fully opening up the rich potential for bilateral cooperation between Russia and Bulgaria, including in international affairs.

Boris Yeltsin confirmed Russia's stance in relation to NATO expansion and stressed the pressing need for international efforts to set up a system for pan-European security, the report by the Russian Federation president's press service states.

Yeltsin, Bulgaria's Snedov Oppose NATO Expansion

LD2901155896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1538 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 29 (ITAR-TASS) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Bulgarian parliament speaker Blagovest Snedov said that there was no necessity in expanding NATO, the presidential press service said on Monday.

During a brief meeting, the two leaders discussed Russian-Bulgarian relations and expressed the confidence that it was essential to strengthen and promote them in the spirit of traditional friendship between the two peoples.

Russia: Primakov Calls Relations With Ukraine 'Priority'

LD3001110496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1038 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Mikhail Melnik]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Jan 30 (ITAR-TASS) — The main objective of the talks in Kiev between Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov and Ukrainian senior officials is to prepare necessary documents for an official visit to Ukraine by Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Ukrainian Foreign Ministry officials told ITAR-TASS. The talks will start on Wednesday.

During his stay in Kiev, the Russian minister will meet Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, Supreme Council Chairman Aleksandr Moroz and other Ukrainian senior officials.

Primakov will also meet his Ukrainian counterpart Gennadiy Udovenko to discuss relations between the two countries, in particular division of the Black Sea fleet and demarcation of the Russian-Ukrainian frontier as well as international issues of mutual interest.

At a press-conference in Moscow, Primakov said that Russian-Ukrainian relations are faced with serious problems which are to be settled. Relations with Ukraine are

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priority for Russia, and "they must be developed and improved," he noted.

Russia: Primakov: Military Presence in Tajikistan To Remain

LD2901155496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1503 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov said Monday that Moscow must maintain its military presence in Tajikistan. He was speaking at the end of a trip to Dushanbe, Tajikistan and Tashkent, Uzbekistan, together with Defense Chief Pavel Grachev and Director of Foreign Intelligence Vyacheslav Trubnikov. "If we pull out from Tajikistan, a wave of destabilization may sweep throughout the whole of Central Asia, which is the underbelly of Russia," Primakov stressed.

He said none of "the government structures" in Tajikistan was opposed to the presence of Russia's 201th division and Russian border guards in that country.

The minister said Russia "has maximum interest in stabilizing the situation in Tajikistan," a process implying a settling of relations between Dushanbe and opposition members together with relations between other countries in the region, as well as a solution to the region's economic problems.

He denied media reports saying the commander of the 1st brigade of the Tajik armed forces deployed in Kurgan-Tyube had demanded Russia that pull out from the republic. "Both the commander and population of the republic were outraged over those reports," Primakov said.

On the working visit to Tashkent by a number of Russian ministry officials, the minister said "Uzbekistan is particularly interested to see the situation in Tajikistan stabilized." The current tension in Tajikistan and ways of defusing it were high on the agenda of his meeting with President Islam Karimov and other Uzbek officials.

On the resumption of peace talks between Dushanbe and opposition leaders due later today in Ashgabat, Primakov said the agenda of meetings in both Tashkent and Dushanbe was focused on what must be done to make "this round of talks successful." In this connection he said Russian diplomacy was working in all directions to help the negotiating teams "display utmost flexibility."

Russian Foreign Minister Primakov Begins Belarus Visit

LD3001120596 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1000 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The two-day visit of Russian foreign minister Yevgeniy Primakov to Belarus began today. Our correspondent Yuriy Svirko reports from Minsk.

[Svirko] It looks like visiting Belarus at the end of January is becoming traditional for the heads of the Russian foreign affairs department. On 23-24 January 1995 Andrey Kozyrev visited Minsk. But the present visit of Yevgeniy Primakov is not traditional. He flew to Minsk not in a private plane but by a regular flight of Belavia Airlines. This is extremely unusual for an official visit by the head of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He will fly to Kiev from here, and, by the way, he will also take the regular AN-24 flight.

Why was Minsk chosen to be the first place to visit? The answer to this question has not changed over the past year. Both Andrey Kozyrev and Boris Yeltsin, when they were in Minsk last winter, asserted that relations with the CIS countries were a priority in Russia's foreign policy and, in relations within the CIS, Belarus is a priority.

The Belarusian Foreign Minister Uladzimir Syanko told journalists that this meeting will not be just an introduction. Issues which have accumulated concerning the customs union, military-political integration, and the relations inside the commonwealth are going to be discussed. Yevgeniy Primakov went straight from the airport precisely to the meeting with his Belarusian colleague. [passage omitted]

Russia: Defense Minister Grachev Kazakhstan Visit Reviewed

MM2901093296 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 27 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Vladimir Ardayev: "Russia and Kazakhstan Intend To Create Defense Alliance"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Almaty — Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev told journalists on his arrival in Almaty that Kazakhstan and Russia have plenty of problems in the sphere of military cooperation. To be specific he pointed in particular to problems like the joint use of military test sites and problems associated with troop units' basing in Kazakhstan, and also Russia's use of defense installations in Kazakhstan.

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It is well known how long and hard Russia and Kazakhstan tried to reach a compromise over the Baykonur space center, the Sary-Shagan missile test site, and a number of other test facilities. The fact that the former USSR's military-industrial complex made active use of the vast steppes of Kazakhstan for its own ends is no secret to anyone; a sizable military scientific and technical infrastructure remains there to this day. It will take plenty of time and effort to finally resolve all the bones of contention surrounding its running. Each side is insistently pursuing its own ends: Russia does not want to abandon its costly bases, Kazakhstan intends to derive more benefit for itself from this.

Nevertheless, after his 25 January meeting with Nursultan Nazarbayev Pavel Grachev stressed that Nazarbayev is a very keen supporter of joint use of installations of mutual interest. He explained that it is a question of ballistic missile defense and missile guidance systems.

A global military cooperation agreement was signed by Russia and Kazakhstan 3 March 1994. To date there are 21 agreements in force between these states in the sphere of military-technical cooperation. Nazarbayev confirmed that during his last meeting with President Yeltsin questions pertaining to the further deepening of this cooperation were discussed and this meeting took place in the context of strengthening the common defense area.

In addition to the problems that Pavel Grachev had already highlighted, the Kazakhstani president cited such problems as the training of Kazakhstani military cadres at Russian military educational establishments and Russian aid for Kazakhstan in developing a naval base in the Caspian.

A joint session of the two defense ministries' military collegiums was scheduled during this visit by Pavel Grachev. It is known that a sizable package of documents is ready for signing, which will lend Kazakhstani-Russian military cooperation the appearance of such defense alliances as those between Russia and Ukraine and Russia and Belarus.

Yeltsin Offers Condolences to Poet's Widow

LD3001095496 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0900 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian President Boris Yeltsin today sent his condolences to the widow of poet Iosip Brodskiy, Nobel Prize winner, who died on Saturday night. [27th January].

Iosip Brodskiy will be buried in a New York cemetery on Wednesday [31 January].

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Political Issues

Krasnov Discusses Liberals' Nonsupport for Yeltsin

MM2601150696 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 26 Jan 96 p 5

[Article by Mikhail Krasnov, Russian Federation presidential aide: "Do Not Pick at Pimples. They Will Go of Their Own Accord"]

[FBIS Translated Text] To all appearances panic has gripped not the Kremlin, as some journalists supposed, but part of the liberal intelligentsia and through them the mass media. And the more words there are predicting disaster, the more the reds gloat and the louder the noise they make as they rub their hands.

What is the pretext now for the outburst of attacks on the president, which sometimes acquire the nature of persecution? Basically the recent cadres decisions and the Kizlyar-Pervomayskoye drama. Of course, there is also a lot of "nit-picking" over Boris Yeltsin's words and decisions — as the psychologists would say it is a psychological fixation [ustanovka].

There is a psychological fixation. How else to explain the mass media's morbidly close attention to the president and the way they blame him for everything? The reason for this fixation is another matter.

I suggest that many bearers of the Russian liberal idea have not emerged from the "age of puberty" (politically speaking, of course). And, as we know, that period is characterized by excessive naivete, by rose-tinted romanticism, by so-called youthful excess, by aggression in assessing the behavior of "adults," and, finally, by the inclination toward symbolism.

In some way this phenomenon can be explained by the fact that Russian democracy itself is living through such a period. And in its "adolescent pimples" the liberals have seen what is virtually the collapse of all hopes. It is hard to believe that all the mass media are fulfilling someone's paid order. Rather these are the results of this same "physiology."

Two characteristics of this "period of puberty" can be singled out in particular today: Excess and symbolism in thinking.

"Today or never," "this way and no other" — those are the main slogans attending the liberals' present attitude toward the country's president. An interesting picture is formed: The liberally oriented press and television companies are demanding mutually exclusive steps from the president. That is the charges which were leveled against Zhirinovskiy, for instance, can now be leveled at the democrats (this name has become definitively hypothetical. It attests rather to anticommunism and anti-powerdom. Nonetheless I shall use it for brevity's sake). So the democrats criticize with equal aggression the insufficient liberalism of the government's economic course and its social costs. But the world has long been familiar with the law of inverse proportion — the more liberalism there is in economic policy, the narrower the state's social potential becomes. And vice versa.

The eruption, the breakthrough of liberalism has passed. Sane people realize not only the need for it but also how grave the social losses have been.

But for all that few people, in assessing the results of the liberal revolution in Russia, consider one more factor. The eruption or breakthrough took place not in a stable state but coincided with a change in the main principles of management, the principles of the state mechanism. Naturally this change does not immediately ensure a strong power. On the contrary this change inevitably causes for a while a contradictory power a long way from efficiency. Under these conditions enormous effort goes on the actual assertion of new principles of statehood. After all, the former principles of management (command principles, as they used to be called) have been replaced by rule-of-law principles. (It would undoubtedly be easier to implement reforms on the basis of authoritarian principles. But the president did not take that path, understanding the danger to the apparatus of the temptations of authoritarian rule which he would later find it hard to reject). So reliance on the law is so far proving an ineffective basis for management. After all, for the law to start to rule and to acquire insuperable force a prepared public consciousness is also needed. So far there is nowhere to get it from.

So that the absence, under these conditions, of a social eruption, the absence of the collapse of the Russian state are the fruit of Boris Yeltsin's efforts and authority. And it is not a case of his former services as mitigating circumstances but of the ability of this individual to continue to remain the wall which will prevent the sneaking restoration from being carried out.

The president is by no means different "then" and "now" as some liberals think. The situation in the country has changed. Today, thanks to the president's incredible efforts, efforts which, moreover, have been understood and supported by far from everyone, the first stage in the assertion of the new, without inverted commas, democratic statehood has taken place and is being completed. And now, on this basis, the president is trying to center the development line so that Russia does not fall apart. Yet people demand that he still "stand on a tank."

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Do serious liberal analysts and journalists really lack a sober view? Do they really fail to understand that liberalism to the degree in which it is manifested in the socioeconomic sphere of developed states simply cannot exist in present-day Russia? That attempts to follow only that line of development will generate (and indeed already have generated) such a powerful wrenching away of an enormous part of society that this wrenching away will simply bury not only the liberal idea but also the social democratic idea (I am astounded at those who think that the next elections, in four years' time, will be for liberally oriented politicians. Gentlemen, there may simply not be any next elections if this time you fall over yourselves in distancing yourselves from the president and devote six months to wearing him down).

The present changes (and no one denies them) in the president's policy in no way mean a drift toward the Chinese model of socialism. If only because we have real political freedom, including a multiparty system. The president has not been and is not faced with the question of beating back the wave of reformism. In actual fact it is a case of a greater degree of regulation both of the reforms themselves and of those spheres which these reforms affect.

Possibly the word "regulation" offends the liberals' ears. Then I ask you: Find a reserve where you could "raise" educated, honest, skilled entrepreneurs who understand, moreover, that no one will take away their wealth if with their assistance all Russia's working citizens become affluent. There is no such reserve? Then forgive me, but the president who has responsibility for the country and the formation of its new identity has nothing left to him but to "retreat" a little and urge the state to take a more active part in production and distribution. I do not mention the fact that so far this is closer to the awareness of almost the majority of Russian citizens. Let us leave excess to the young. We should not demand it of the Russian president.

And now about the symbolism of the liberal consciousness.

What are we? Have our university diplomas really given us no advantage over tribes for whom totems are an inalienable part of life?

No one will dispute that Sergey Filatov, Andrey Kozyrev, and Anatoliy Chubays openly preached and defended their liberal views and did not originate in the party nomenklatura and so on and so forth. They were indeed not seen to be guilty of political vagueness. And imperceptibly they became symbols. Yet they are not figures from the commedia dell'arte playing a strictly set role and speaking familiar words and finding themselves in very specific situations. They are living people. But at the same time politics are not the Italian theater but living action. The country's president is the only one to have been elected by the whole people. So he carries enormous responsibility. But since we agree that this burden of responsibility is borne by the head of state why do we refuse him freedom of action, the freedom to assess his subordinates? After all, we know that freedom without responsibility is anarchy and responsibility without freedom of will and freedom of choice is slavery.

Yes, a democratic president should consider public opinion and should consider the symbolic value of some resignations and appointments. But only insofar as he himself after assessing and weighing up numerous circumstances realizes that the factor of responsibility for the conservation of some greater value requires that he make what may even be an unpopular decision in certain circles.

By all means criticize specific words or decisions of the president. That is why he constantly defends freedom of speech. But do not immediately draw far-reaching conclusions. Do not create "token" figures. Ultimately that is neither democratic nor liberal. Incidentally, the opposite "tokenism" can be observed whereby someone, in this case N. Yegorov, is turned into a hawk. And only because he emphasizes the Chechen problem in his own way.

But why then is being a symbol denied to Boris Yeltsin himself. I fear I maybe wrong but I think it is because in contrast to those whom the president dismisses, his own actions and sometimes even his own life are known to all society. A "symbol" presupposes a very superficial acquaintance with his qualities.

The main charge leveled against the president is the Chechen problem. Yes, that is the cross that Russia and its president must bear. Anyone who thinks that he coldheartedly makes decisions connected with this subject knows nothing about Boris Yeltsin.

A lot of advice is given. But as a rule it is one-sided academic advice sometimes of striking originality but nothing more. No one in the world actually knows how to untie the knot so as not to begin the chain reaction of Russia's destruction, how to eliminate the gangs and safeguard normal people's lives (peremptory statements about how the problem should be resolved are good only in that they add new viewpoints for analysis).

Chechnya is not a theorem which can be proven by strict logic. So the president literally has to feel his way at every step. He realizes no one can do it for him. The presidential candidates' ready-made formulas are their own designs which have not been proved in any way

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by anyone. Any Russian president will have to proceed in the same way — step by step. Otherwise, without weighing up all the circumstances — it is terrible even to think of it....

For my part it would be a lie to speak of the irreproachable quality of all political decisions. Just as I would be lying to speak of their execution, including by force. But instead of the help which might be expected from the democratic camp, instead of attempts to explain and understand the logic of actions from the very start of the Chechen events the president started to receive insults and labels. "Impotence of power," "the collapse of the army" and so forth are key words which are the same in the communist and democratic press.

With the red opposition everything is clear. But few of the president's allies have said to themselves: But who are we ourselves? After all, we are everywhere — in offices and sessions halls, in barracks and shops — we are everywhere, the direct continuation of our former Soviet selves. These are the generations educated in a completely different world. Our servility to our superiors, surprisingly combined with our failure to fulfill orders, and thumbing our noses at them behind their backs. Our "perhaps," our idealism and starry-eyed vision. And much else besides. But it is all our common possession. So that we should not turn the authorities into aliens or celestial beings. The authorities are the average face of the Russian citizen. That is the case and will be the case wherever the authorities are formed through free elections. It is another matter that specific people both in society and in power can be far above and, conversely, far below, the average level. Guessing who will surpass that level is the permanent task of the voter and the mass media who help him in this task.

Of course even in Russia there will, I hope, come a time when public criticism of the power structures and politicians in the form of "wiping them across the floor" will not entail political upheavals in the country. But today — is it the time for this? I do not urge you to safeguard the president. But at least protect our common possession — freedom of speech — of which only 10 years ago no one could even dare to dream and of which we could still be deprived to a considerable degree thanks to that freedom itself.

To finish I shall repeat that the main guarantee of Russia's advance toward its constitutional aims remains President Yeltsin (and not simply the president in general). Those who share these aims but at the same time deny the president the ability to bear responsibility for the country are committing a historical crime against themselves, their children, and ultimately Russia. They are either not thinking about whether anyone else will have such a rare combination of fighting qualities without aggression and caution and thoughtfulness without cowardice or, like stupid adolescents, they are thinking along the lines of "biting off their nose to spite their face."

Gorbachev: Yeltsin Stands No Chance for Honest Reelection

LD2701185796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1704 GMT 27 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 27 (INTERFAX) — Boris Yeltsin stands no chance to be re-elected as Russian president if the elections are honest, former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev told a presentation of his new book in Moscow Friday.

Gorbachev said the probability that the elections will be held on time is "fifty-fifty."

At the same time, he was satisfied with Yeltsin's repeated statements that the presidential elections will be held on June 16, as envisioned by the constitution. Another advantage of Yeltsin is that the Duma elections were held last month in accordance with the constitution, he added.

The people will see if the person is decent or not, if he has enough brains to drive the country out, how he treats people and what kind of program proposes, Gorbachev said. "It will be impossible to buy people," he added.

Gorbachev said he was not member of any party, but kept his communist card in a safe box.

Shumeyko Hopes Yeltsin Runs for Reelection

LD2901194596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1920 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KALININGRAD, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — Former chairman of the Federation Council (Russian parliament's upper chamber) and leader of the Reforms-New Course movement Vladimir Shumeyko today said he hoped that President Boris Yeltsin would run for re-election.

"Otherwise, the present head of state would recognize that everything that was done during his rule was done in a wrong way and was in vain," Shumeyko told a press conference in Kaliningrad, a regional center in western Russia, today. Shumeyko came to Kaliningrad on a two-day visit Monday.

The recent changes in the upper echelons of power prove that a correction of the policy of reforms has begun, Shumeyko said.

All Russian parties and movements will introduce a draft of the presidential message to parliament on

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January 30, Shumeyko said. "After the draft is discussed and corrected in the regions, it will be sent to Boris Yeltsin," he said.

If President Yeltsin "takes this draft into account when drawing up his message," the Reforms-New Course movement "will support Yeltsin at the coming presidential elections," Shumeyko said. "If not, we will have to give that serious thought," he said.

In Kaliningrad, Shumeyko is scheduled to meet with the public and speak on air on local television.

Six of 33 Action Committees Nominate Yeltsin for Presidency

LD2901175096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1607 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — The Central Electoral Commission (CEC) registered five more action committees which nominated their presidential candidates on Monday.

The committees nominated President Boris Yeltsin, National Republican Party leader Nikolay Lysenko, Duma deputy Galina Starovoytova, pensioner Yan Koltunov and Narodnaya Gazeta chief editor Sergey Skvortsov.

In total, the CEC has registered 33 action committees, including six that have nominated Boris Yeltsin for re-election.

According to the election law, only electoral commissions are entitled to organize and hold presidential elections, CEC Secretary Aleksandr Veshnyakov said, referring to the recently created Nationwide Committee for Presidential Elections. He underlined that executive bodies may only assist electoral commissions in the exercise of their powers.

At the same time, Veshnyakov said the election law prohibited assistance by the executive in favor of this or that candidate.

Baburin Views Russia's Preelection Political Scene

MM2601164196 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 24 Jan 96 pp 1, 2

[Interview with Sergey Baburin of the "Power to the People!" bloc by Nadezhda Garifullina; place and date not given; published under the "Elections Behind, Elections Ahead" rubric: "Sergey Baburin: 'Broad People's Front Cannot Be Created Without Communist Party of the Russian Federation'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Garifullina] Sergey Nikolayevich, much has already been written and said about the State Duma elections that have taken place, yet that is only the tip of the iceberg. Which features of the election campaign would you note?

[Baburin] The State Duma elections marked the new parliament's beginning and at the same time drew a line under the period of clearing away the debris of the Supreme Soviet. After the September (1993) coup d'etat the emergence of a political system continued, as did at the same time, or first of all, the emergence of patriotic and left-wing forces and the determination of their appearance. Maybe it was the growing mood of opposition which forced the ruling circles to take serious steps to play a tactical election game. I am referring to the appearance of 43 electoral associations — registered ones, in fact there were considerably more of them. It is by no means coincidental and certainly not a natural occurrence. It is a really subtle political game.

[Garifullina] But all the same the regime did not succeed in achieving this strategic aim....

[Baburin] The election results unequivocally showed that, compared with 1993 and especially the period 1989-1990, the public mood had changed very markedly. There was a sobering up. This is evidenced by the victory of certain opposition organizations. I would, of course, single out two. They are the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF], which won the elections with a relative majority of parliamentary seats. And, strange as it may seem, I also consider the "Communists—Working Russia—For the Soviet Union" bloc a winner. Why? Maybe the parties and movements making up this bloc — and for all our disputes I categorize them, like the CPRF and the Agrarian Party, as strategic allies of the ROS [Russian National Union] — were in the most unfavorable conditions. They were stifled more than others by the information blockade and were fairly successfully discredited in the voters' eyes, but for all that, having virtually no financial resources, they practically garnered 5 percent of the vote. I am not going to guess whether the figure reported by the Central Electoral Commission is accurate, but the fact that this bloc approached the threshold is a fact even according to the declared results. This is a significant success for Russia's extreme left-wing opposition. It is, if you like, also a warning to the CPRF and a number of other organizations: Be consistent otherwise there are forces which could replace you.

[Garifullina] But maybe the 5-percent threshold was set much too high?

[Baburin] No. Both before the elections and now I believed and still believe that the 5-percent barrier should not be lowered. Even though four electoral associations have now gotten into the State Duma —

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those which had stronger structures or more money than those which were left out in the cold. But it is an incentive for us to strengthen the former and find the latter.

[Garifullina] What lessons are the ROS and your bloc as a whole learning from their failure in the elections?

[Baburin] Above all, as the ROS Political Council decided at its first session after the elections, the "Power to the People!" bloc made a strategic error in its political propaganda and could not save face. By leaning toward the CPRF in most of its election materials and by saying in leaflets and video clips that "Power to the People!" is the same organization as the CPRF, the campaigners put people in the position of having to choose between the copy and the original. Of course, many people preferred the original. And we easily garnered 5 percent only in the places where we managed to explain that, unlike the CPRF, we are campaigning for a broad national-patriotic coalition and that maybe we are campaigning harder and more consistently than our allies on the left. We even got 10 percent in Omsk, 7 percent in Yakutia, etc.

Maybe we also made a mistake by not entering the elections under the ROS flag — an already well-known political organization — and by creating a new bloc. Without access to television, except for seven to 10 minutes of free airtime, we were unable to tell voters about ourselves and our positions. When the elections were over the electoral bloc apparently ceased to exist, but we intend to maintain businesslike and amicable relations with the mothers' movement "For Social Justice" and with the Union of Officers.

[Garifullina] But 60 percent of the vote was expected for the opposition. In fact in terms of parliamentary seats it obtained around 35-45 percent of that figure. Who helped the regime to "erode" the opposition?

[Baburin] Had the main opposition forces — communist organizations and some socialist and patriotic movements and parties — entered as a united bloc they could easily have obtained 50 percent of the vote. But now, if the State Duma election results are assessed dispassionately, we have to talk of the CPRF's victory and the opposition's defeat.

[Garifullina] ?? [punctuation as published]

[Baburin] Yes, of the defeat of the opposition as a whole, paradoxical as it may seem. After all, what tasks was the opposition facing? It was supposed to take control of the State Duma, obtaining if not a qualified majority — 66 percent— then at least a stable, solid majority of over 50 percent. But now the opposition does not have a majority in the State Duma.

[Garifullina] In your first news conference after the elections you said that the CPRF's victory puts it in a very difficult position. Why?

[Baburin] Currently our strategic allies are shouldering the full burden of historic responsibility for both the newly elected State Duma and its decisions and the future development of events in our country. The opposition is raising with the CPRF the question of creating a broad people's front, because only it as the leading party can facilitate the creation of such a front and be the main influential force in it, but it may also wreck this idea if it tries to monopolize the representation of all voters' interests.

Incidentally, I do not want to criticize our allies now because we still want to try to unite in the new Duma the Agrarians, the deputies from our bloc — and a total of 12 of us have been elected in districts — and independent deputies who have so far not joined a political organization. If we manage to create one or two large groups from among the independent deputies whose positions are close to the CPRF's, and unite in a bloc, then there is a chance of gaining a parliamentary majority.

This chance is very slender and I think you can understand why I am restrained in my assessments at the moment. Yet I cannot fail to state that the unwillingness of the CPRF and Agrarian Party leaderships to unite with others predetermined the 1995 election results for the opposition. Of course, the Agrarians were taught the hardest lesson. Although there were, of course, surprises. I think many people were surprised by the failure of the Congress of Russian Communities [KRO], which spent a vast amount of money on its election campaign and which had much more television and radio exposure than "Power to the People!" and many other organizations put together.

In exactly the same way I consider the defeat of "Russia's Democratic Choice" and the "Women of Russia" movement to be normal. The former proved to be unviable and had outlived itself politically. The latter, because of its completely faceless political position during its two years in the Duma, was unable to gain authority in the opinion of most voters. Nothing passes unnoticed. Nothing is forgotten. Neither a principled nor an unprincipled approach.

[Garifullina] Sergey Nikolayevich, after the elections a number of deputies announced that they were relinquishing their powers. For example, Tuleyev, Nikita Mikhalkov, and even the head of "Our Home...." How do you react to that?

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[Baburin] Calmly, because the government is the real authority and the status of head of the cabinet cannot be compared to that of a deputy. It might surprise you to learn that I believe that in the transitional period it would be better if government members kept their deputy's seat. This would be more in keeping with the principle of a parliamentary republic or a Soviet republic. In this case the representative organ of power has an opportunity to form a government and influence it. I would not be afraid to make changes to the Constitution in order to get away from the monopolism of a presidential republic, whereby the government is completely under the control of and in the hands of the president.

I greeted the report, which admittedly was extremely belated, of Kozyrev's dismissal from his foreign minister's post with satisfaction. As regards Tuleyev, I am sure that Aman Gumirovich is making the right move: It is important that we, the opposition, fight for the representation of patriotic and left-wing forces in the Federation Council. And there is no doubt that Aman Gumirovich is a fighter.

[Garifullina] Many people regard the last election campaign as a dress rehearsal for the main — presidential — campaign. Many leaders have had a chance to calculate their chances. Now a new race is starting: There were 43 associations, now the names of over 20 presidential candidates are already known. What lessons can the opposition learn from the last elections in order to avoid repeating their mistakes in the presidential election?

[Baburin] Learning lessons, and especially avoiding mistakes in the future, are no easy things. Particularly in politics, where diverse interests clash — both group interests and those of a particular leader. In the Duma elections it did not prove possible to overcome politicians' ambitions and differences in world outlook between parties, associations, and blocs. If the same happens again in the presidential election the result will be even more unfortunate.

I can show this from the example of our own Omsk Oblast. For two months consultations went on between the CPRF, Agrarian Party, trade unions, KRO, and LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia], and we were already close to nominating a single candidate for the governor's post. It is quite possible that he could have been a leader of the CPRF's Omsk branch. Unexpectedly an Omsk CPRF Oblast Committee plenum unilaterally nominated its own candidate. So there was no option but to follow this example. All this ensured the victory of the current governor, Leonid Polezhayev. Actually he could have celebrated his success from the moment the opposition rejected a single election candidate. I would like this lesson to be learned above all by our allies, because over 50 percent of results depend on the CPRF's actions.

[Garifullina] But now an interesting situation is arising whereby several people from the CPRF's federal list intend to run in the presidential election. Petr Romanov's nomination has been declared. Aman Tuleyev intends to run. For the last two years Gennadiy Zyuganov has been talked of as the CPRF candidate as if the question had been decided....

[Baburin] I make no secret of the fact that I am extremely surprised that already at least three CPRF candidates intend to run for president. It is madness! It is worse than I could have imagined. If there are several candidates from the Communist Party faction, that means that you and I will get Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin for a second term.

[Garifullina] In a recent television conversation with Yevgeniy Kiselev Gennadiy Seleznev conjectured that two candidates — Yeltsin and Zhirinovskiy — could be left in the presidential marathon and that the Communists will be forced to urge voters to vote for Yeltsin. Of course, this is a hypothetical situation, yet....

[Baburin] I would rather not comment on that now.

[Garifullina] How do you rate the chances of Gorbachev, who has stated that he will form a team which will nominate either himself or Yavlinskiy?

[Baburin] Get this straight, I do not want to discuss this individual at all, and I say to you honestly: I would not want to have anything to with a team of which he is a member. I will never accept him as a Russian Federation presidential candidate. Enough! We have had enough of Gorbachev. Once bitten, twice shy. What we have today is the result of the combined efforts of both Yeltsin and Gorbachev. Boris Nikolayevich must not be blamed for everything.

[Garifullina] Nonetheless Gorbachev is now starting to fill the role of someone in opposition to Yeltsin. This is reminiscent of 1990-1991. They have simply changed roles. What can you say about the other candidates?

[Baburin] As far as I know Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, Svyatoslav Fedorov, Zhirinovskiy, etc., etc. are making no secret of their desire to run.

[Garifullina] Sergey Nikolayevich, you have already declared that you are not contemplating participation as a presidential candidate until the year 2000. But what is the ROS's position?

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[Baburin] An ROS congress is scheduled for 27 January, it will determine our attitude toward the elections of a president, Federation components' legislative organs, and local self-government organs. Personally I will do all I can to ensure that the left-wing patriotic forces have a single candidate. If the CPRF splits into several streams, I and my supporters will nominate my old colleague Svetlana Petrovna Goryacheva and will try to ensure that she becomes president — since men cannot reach agreement through consultations and mutual concessions and determine a single candidate.

[Garifullina] What are Yeltsin's chances if he runs?

[Baburin] In the absence of a single opposition candidate his chances will be better than and preferable to anybody else's.

[Garifullina] The previous State Duma is already history. What is your assessment of its two years on the Russian political scene?

[Baburin] It had considerable success in creating a political mechanism for change. An equivocal mechanism, because the Duma was unable to prevent the unlawful second stage of privatization. Everything that Chubays' department was doing was not based on the law, and that is why a review of this privatization is inevitable.

Much was done in the work on the Civil Code. Whether you agree or disagree with something, changing civil law is indisputably a remarkable landmark in reforming our relationships within the country and putting them on a more modern level that is above all in our internal interests, so that we do not take it into our heads to copy Western models. Various laws passed by the Duma can be regarded with mixed feelings — for example, the work on the Land Code, which is being handed over to the new set of deputies for completion.

[Garifullina] In your view what should be the new Duma's priority? Which problems should it tackle first?

[Baburin] First of all it should take emergency measures to increase the population's living standard. Currently there are regions where people are living not only on the poverty line but also on the verge of starvation. The Russian population is deserting the regions of the Extreme North.

There should also be immediate decisions to ensure external security and to strengthen our borders and the country's defense. To be honest, the Duma will have so much work that we risk becoming like the literary figure who patched up his famous caftan [Trishka in Krylov's fable "Trishka's Caftan," who used parts of his caftan to mend other parts of it]. And we will become like him unless we carry out tax reform in 1996, change the principles of budget policy, and protect the domestic producer, that is, unless we give him a chance to work and to produce instead of importing low-quality goods from abroad. I am categorically in favor of decreasing the tax burden on production in order to let it breathe, take in oxygen, and carry on living. We know how to do this, and if we had a solid majority the economy could be rapidly revived. So we will try, relying on independent deputies, to form such a majority. While the next task for deputies from the "Power to the People!" bloc who have gotten into the Duma — they are Sergey Iosifovich Manyakin, Sergey Glotov, Ivan Stepanovich Anichkin, Anatoliy Greshnevikov, Nina Andreyevna Zatsepina, General Nikolay Maksimovich Bezborodov, Nikolay Ivanovich Ryzhkov, and others — is to form a deputies' group capable of organizing our work in the Duma and of becoming a political force which protects all our regions. To spite Moscow's political intrigues.

[Garifullina] Will this be another "Russian Way"?

[Baburin] I do not think so. The time for "Russian Way" has passed, as it has for the "Russia" faction, although I maybe just might bring back the latter name. But it must and will be in keeping with the character of most deputies, and far from all of us in this group could be completely like-minded. If we are talking about a broad coalition, there could be serious differences of opinion but unity on fundamental positions.

[Garifullina] I know that you stand for the re-creation of a united Russian state, which for 70 years was called the Soviet Union. Do you think that this year there will be progress on this in parliament, can more realistic and tangible steps be expected?

[Baburin] It is most realistic that a step toward starting to reestablish a united state will be taken in 1996, and such a step could be the reunification of the Russian Federation and the Belarusian Republic. Why wait for everybody? Let us unite with those who are ready and willing to do so. Currently the main obstacle to such a reunification is the political regime in the Kremlin. If it changes, integration will proceed faster.

[Garifullina] Sergey Nikolayevich, the new year has already begun. What would you like to wish for the voters, the Russian people?

[Baburin] I would like to wish for every voter and the Russian people as a whole that 1996 brings prosperity and peace. That serious steps are taken toward this.

[Garifullina] And for yourself?

[Baburin] That, working in this area, now in the post of deputy chairman of the State Duma, I am successful and that people who have put their faith in me as a

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deputy and in the ROS and who have given support to our "Power to the People!" bloc will be able to see that they did the right thing, and that at the next elections there are many more such people.

Russia: ITAR-TASS Views Factions' Preelection Stances

LD2901151396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1423 GMT 29 Jan 96

[By Lyudmila Aleksandrova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW January 29 (ITAR-TASS) — The main political forces in Russia continue to determine their tactics at the start of the presidential race.

The congress of the Yabloko association, which nominated Grigoriy Yavlinskiy for the Russian presidency last Saturday, did not offer any political surprises.

The Yabloko leader called on all democrats to display broad unity at the election campaign. However, he did not conceal that they should rally precisely behind his candidacy. According to Yavlinskiy, he did not see any other candidates from democratic forces.

He made a special accent in his speech on negation of any possibility for an alliance with the Communists. Yavlinskiy spoke about "a political short-sightedness" of those who try, according to him, to represent Russian premier Viktor Chernomyrdin as the most acceptable candidate for the presidential elections.

Legislator Ella Pamfilova, close to the Russian Republican Party, came out with an initiative of holding a forum of all democratic and centrist forces to nominate a single candidate.

However, apart from Republicans, nobody supported this proposal so far. Nevertheless, Pamfilova told ITAR-TASS on Monday that she held talks with many democratic and centrist politicians, and nobody refused to participate in such a forum.

However, she does not want to call names for the time being "in order not to scare them." According to Pamfilova, the forum is planned to be held no later than on February 24-25. It should be evidently clear next week who will participate in it.

A sponsoring group which nominated Mikhail Gorbachev at long last, was established last Saturday. There are almost no prominent politicians among people who nominated the former Soviet president.

The group is headed by former member of the Federation Council (Russian parliament upper chamber of the previous Russian parliament) Aleksey Manannikov.

It is unclear for the time being how Gorbachev will respond to this initiative (although sponsors claimed that he did not oppose his nomination) as well as whether any of numerous social democratic organisations will join his election campaign.

An election forum was held, at last, by a radical left-wing party: The congress of Labour Russia discussed the question on a single candidate from left-wing forces. Movement leader Viktor Anpilov virtually called on his supporters to back the nomination of Gennadiy Zyuganov, leader of the Russian Communist Party.

True, Anpilov spoke about "a candidate from the Russian Communist Party," but it was clear that he meant precisely the party leader.

He virtually hinted to Communists supporting Zyuganov that Anpilov's followers will support Zyuganov at the elections without any conditions if he observes minimum rules of propriety.

Yeltsin Praises New Deputy Prime Minister Kadannikov

LD2601142596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1334 GMT 26 Jan 96

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 26 (ITAR-TASS) — President Yeltsin has described Vladimir Kadannikov, who was appointed on Thursday by a presidential decree to the post of Deputy Prime Minister, as "most experienced, competent and clever person and a patriot of Russia." He said it in response to a Tass question before his meeting with heads of the republics, integrated in the Russian Federation.

"Such a good director, and of such an enterprise, which employs 200,000 people, cannot but know both the national economy and finances in detail," Yeltsin said. Kadannikov, he continued, visited dozens of countries, met financiers and business people from many countries of the world. According to Yeltsin, Kadannikov is well known both in this country and abroad.

"Kadannikov is not the only one who will replace Chubays. He will replace him together with Kazakov," Yeltsin stressed. According to the president, Aleksandr Kazakov, appointed Chairman of the State Property Committee last Thursday, is a "clever and promising young man, I would say a talented man." He worked as deputy head of the State Property Committee together with Chubays, which was a good training for him. "He is an excellent specialist in privatization, and will further develop it," Yeltsin said.

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Speaking about the division of duties between Kadannikov and Kazakov, Yeltsin stressed that Kadannikov would be in charge of the external sphere, would hold talks with other countries and international institutions and tackle strategically important problems. In the opinion of the president, "these two will be no inferior to Chubays."

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Kadannikov Begins Work 30 Jan

LD2901172896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1504 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — Vladimir Kadannikov, appointed Russian first deputy Prime Minister by President Yeltsin, is expected at his new office tomorrow, a Russian government source has reported. He added that his study on the fifth floor of the Government House on the Krasnopresnenskaya embankment faces that of the other first deputy prime minister Oleg Soskovets, and had been the office of Anatoliy Chubays before he was sacked by Yeltsin on January 16.

A notice board fastened by workers on the wall at the work premises Monday bears Kadannikov's name and indicates his post, a government source has said, recalling that the board with Chubays' name on was taken away right after his resignation.

When Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin returns from Washington, where he is attending the session of the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission, he will sign a ruling officially acknowledging the distribution of functions between the two first deputy prime ministers, the source said.

As for Soskovets, his responsibilities will remain basically unchanged, focusing on industrial policy, military and technical cooperation, and conversion of the defense industry to civilian production. As before, he will lead a number of important government structures, including a commission on restructuring the bodies of executive power.

Kadannikov, who earlier led the Russian auto-giant AvtoVAZ at Togliati on the Volga, will handle economic matters in the cabinet.

By the current set of responsibilities, if Chernomyrdin is away on holiday or on business abroad, Soskovets acts in his absence. This provision is expected to remain in force.

Russia: Duma Prospects of Seleznev, Yavlinskiy Viewed

MM2901164496 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA Weekend Edition in Russian 26 Jan 96 p 5

[Article by Aleksey Kiva: "Sixth Duma: First Impressions"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The new State Duma has finally acquired its speaker and his deputies and committee chairmen. Organizational work is over. It is now time to get down to work. What can be said right now about the sixth Duma, its composition, and possible line of conduct? [passage omitted]

Are There Reasons To Despair?

I recall that at the second forum of political parties, not long before the parliamentary elections, Vladimir Isakov, echoing Nikolay Shmelev and certain others, said: Any force in power will be forced to do roughly the same thing — the scope for decisionmaking is too narrow. It is to this that I attribute the communist Ivan Rybkin's evolution toward social democracy after he began to view the reforms in Russia from within rather than from the sidelines. Given that he proved himself to be a decent man and a true Russian patriot, I do not know whether Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev will tread the same path. Nobody knows for sure. Maybe not even he himself.

The first impression of him is a positive one. The fact that he dissociated himself from Yavlinskiy's strident demands to send the government into retirement is to his credit and indicates this politician's seriousness. Paraphrasing Lenin's words, it is now impossible to be a serious politician without disavowing the good old Marxist notions and without following in the footsteps of other ruling communist parties in former socialist countries.

If the Communists do indeed begin to keep the promises they made to voters — to be a party which provides social protection for the working people without trying to restore the old, obsolescent orders — they would find broad scope for constructive activity. Let us say honestly: There is a vast amount of work here. Roughly speaking, they could take on the same functions which center-leftists, former communists, and current social democrats in former European socialist countries have been fulfilling since they came to power. They are imparting a social thrust to the reforms without wrecking anything. As a rule it is ordinary people who benefit from this.

But on the other hand we cannot fail to take into account that our Communists are in fact communists and not

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"postcommunists," that is to say social democrats. It is by no means guaranteed that Communist Speaker Seleznev will follow in the steps of former speaker and former Communist Rybkin. In fact, we must also bear in mind: a) any Communist's dependence on a collective decision; b) the proximity of the presidential election and the great temptation to turn the Duma into a headquarters for electing a Communist president; c) the Communists' growing confidence in their power; d) the crisis in the democratic movement; e) the Yavlinskiy factor. [passage omitted]

I am sure that historians of Russia's post-socialist period will write not only about the Vladimir Zhirinovskiy phenomenon but also about the Yavlinskiy phenomenon. What in my view is its essence?

First, it is the ease with which, thanks to the press, Yavlinskiy acquired popularity disproportionate to his achievements and size of personality. And the popularity's relative stability given that "the emperor has no clothes." But this often happens in a revolutionary epoch. Having become a complete political bankrupt, Kerenskiy initially enjoyed incredible popularity in the most diverse circles.

Second, at the time of the upsurge in his popularity Yavlinskiy clearly did not have a broad, general sociological and historical education and proved incapable of offering society any clear concept of social development following the collapse of communism.

What we get from Yavlinskiy, if we dig a bit deeper, is something in the middle — between a liberal economy and state capitalism. Which is why it is unrealizable, like his grandiose "500 Days" and "Window of Opportunity" programs, and such like. There is no sign of the mechanisms which could be used to turn what has been conceived into reality. The elements of Yavlinskiy's program are like subassemblies from different machines. They can be used separately. Third, "Yabloko" does not have its own social base unique to itself. Other Duma factions do have one. But if there is neither, conventionally speaking, a social ideal, nor an understanding of the logic of inversive development, nor a solid social base, an artificially created association has absolutely no historical prospect and all that remains is total criticism of anything and everything. In the guise of some far-fetched ideal. Not having endowed Yavlinskiy with keen political flair, nature has generously endowed him with immense ambition and impulsiveness.

Fourth, the Yavlinsky phenomenon is inseparable from his fanatical thirst for power. As most of my colleagues assert, it is power for the sake of power and the fine words about democracy and so on are nothing more than a fig leaf.

What Did Gaydar and Bonner and Co. Fail To Understand?

While exhorting those whom we call democrats to cooperate, as Yelena Bonner and others did repeatedly, while expressing their readiness for such cooperation, as Yegor Gaydar showed many times, the authors of these noble exhortations clearly did not ask themselves: On what grounds and for what? "Yabloko" is in fact a party or a bloc or movement with one leader. It was created for Yavlinskiy. Relying on his charisma or semi-charisma or one-third charisma. Boldyrev left but "Yabloko" remained, if Yavlinskiy leaves, only the memory of it will remain. The movement's leadership is well aware of this. Herein lies, if you like, the hopelessness of the situation. Because "Yabloko" has been given the role of serving its leader's ambitions. If he becomes president "Yabloko" will be all right. But what has this got to do with the future of Russian reforms, especially as, according to universal opinion and the parliamentary election results, Yavlinskiy is unlikely to become president?

Some people might not like to hear it, but the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] and "Yabloko" headed by Yavlinskiy are strategic partners. The Communists are perfectly well aware of this (irrespective of whether there was an understanding between them which Shakhray once disclosed, citing Semago) and they talk about it openly. They say that they will try to find a common language with "Yabloko." That they can win the presidential election only through combined efforts. Either the Communists will vote for Yavlinskiy, or the latter, as has already been the case many times, will weaken the democratic camp by helping the Communists to win. To the Communists, having Yavlinskiy as president would be a lesser evil than, for instance, Yeltsin. In turn Zyuganov as president could properly value Yavlinskiy's services by offering him a position as the leading reformer of "socialism with a human face," which is essentially what he was doing under Gorbachev.

Yavlinskiy faces a very difficult problem, and his progress toward his goal will in no small measure depend on the degree to which it is successfully solved. On the one hand, it is to hit the reformers as hard as possible and form a bloc with the Communists at the right time. On the other hand, it is to ostensibly dissociate himself from the Communists and to engage in mock battles with them so as not to discredit himself in the eyes of the democratically inclined public. This has already manifested itself in classical form in the first days of the sixth State Duma. Having helped to elect the CPRF chairman as speaker, the next day "Yabloko" in the person of Lukin (in the face of criticism of

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"Yabloko" even from the loyal press) exploded in contrived indignation over the Communists' attempts to seize power.

But the above-mentioned problem cannot be solved without a number of conditions. First, as in Orwell's "1984," white must be called black and vice versa. That is, it must be asserted that the current reformers are not reformers because we have neither a market nor democracy. Second, it must be made known "unobtrusively" that our Communists are not exactly Communists but more like democrats.

There is a third thing too. It is to obscure Russian political realities. I was not the only one taken aback by what Yavlinskiy supporter Sergey Mitrokhin said at a Moscow forum. We cannot fight the nationalists and the Communists at the same time, he said; we will enter the parliamentary elections separately and the presidential election in a broader alliance without excluding the Communists, in order to properly repulse the nationalists. "What nationalists, if the main threat comes from the Communists?" — the journalist sitting next to me asked. "They are paving the way for cooperation in advance," I replied.

In our view "Yabloko" will cooperate with the reformers of the cause only: a) when it is advantageous to Yavlinskiy; b) if the "hawks" in the Communist Party gather momentum and the threat to "Yabloko" itself becomes obvious; c) if the "forces of support" change their attitude toward Yavlinskiy; d) in the event of a "mutiny on board the ship" called "Yabloko" because of Yavlinskiy's collaborationism; e) in order to keep the electorate, which has been shocked by its idol's new role. What Zhirinovskiy said about Yavlinskiy — that he duped the voters — really hurt many of "Yabloko's" supporters. While fighting for deputies' seats he masqueraded as a democrat, but having gotten into the Duma he started playing up to the Communists. And "Yabloko" itself is not wild about its role as an accomplice to the Communists because it has people of high standards, and I would not think of equating the movement as a whole and its leader.

We have only to recall that Yavlinskiy managed to impose strict discipline in the leadership of the movement, or rather faction. That is the first thing. The second is that Yavlinskiy is backed by powerful financial circles which have their own clout. But it is obvious, without having to understand it, that they are ultimately working for the Communists and the nationalists and not at all for Yavlinskiy.

Seleznev, Zyuganov Queried on Russian Constitution, Presidency

LD2601214496 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1725 GMT 26 Jan 96

[Interview of State Duma Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev, place and date not given; followed by interview of Communist Party of Russia leader Gennadiy Zyuganov on 22 December 1995, place not given; both interviews conducted by moderator Nikolay Svanidze; from the "Details" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] A week has passed since Gennadiy Seleznev, the Communist faction's candidate, was elected Duma speaker following a dramatic vote that defied the usual perceptions of the balance of forces not only in the Duma, but the country as well.

[Begin recording] [Video shows Gennadiy Seleznev in an office, being questioned by Svanidze off-camera]

[Svanidze] Have you already met the prime minister and president, that is, the leaders of the other branches of state power with whom you will have to work directly?

[Seleznev] I would like to meet them, but I haven't yet.

[Svanidze] And you haven't been invited?

[Seleznev] I haven't been invited. I did get a congratulatory telegram from the prime minister just after I was elected, and two days later, I received a message of greetings from the president. But there have not yet been any official proposals for a meeting, although I think it is essential because we do not want to have a conflict situation from day one. We want to meet and make contact and understand each other.

[Svanidze] Do you regard yourself at the moment as being in the opposition, or not?

[Seleznev] In the opposition. And you know, I also support a constructive approach toward whatever moves the president and government might make. We can see that they've started listening to the opposition's opinion of late. There was a time when they tried to completely ignore what the opposition says. I would say that the president and prime minister should start the day by finding out what the opposition thinks. For example, I start by reading the newspapers that are in opposition to me, in their approaches, their ideologies, their so to speak...

[Svanidze, interrupting] You start off with IZVESTIYA?

[Seleznev] I start by reading SEGODNYA, NEZAVISIMAYA [GAZETA], IZVESTIYA. I look at these newspapers and then move on to papers that I find it easier to

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read, knowing more or less what I will find — I mean the left-wing press. I think that any normal politician should do this. The first thing you do is find out what the opposition is thinking and planning to do. Quite seriously, I think that the president and prime minister should be interested to hear my opinion not only as the State Duma chairman, but also as a representative of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, which is in opposition to the ruling regime.

[Svanidze] Gennadiy Nikolayevich, the Duma and Federation Council were formed under the Constitution currently in force. The Communist Party is flatly against this Constitution. In addition, historically, the Communists are no supporters of parliaments and, in our country, have always advocated soviets, which differ very much from parliaments. When and if the Communist Party comes to power, are you not afraid they will destroy the Duma?

[Seleznev] Well, it is impossible to destroy the Duma. Only the Constitution can destroy, or rather do away with, the Duma. So I am not afraid, and I can say quite openly that our party's policy statements talk about a new constitution — a more soviet constitution. We see democracy in the form of soviets. We consider them to be a fairly effective system and they could have been improved in an evolutionary method. For example, we do not see a presidency in the long term in the Russian Constitution. Not only that, but in a previous interview, I said that Boris Yeltsin would probably win public support if he put forward a legislative initiative and proposed amending the Constitution to remove the republic's presidency so that he goes down in history as the first and last president of Russia. The presidency as an institution has not yet proved its viability. Whoever is president will be interfering in the business of the legislature by issuing decrees and in the business of the executive — the Council of Ministers or the Cabinet of Ministers — by appointing its members, reshuffling them, and so on, because of the nature of the presidency's duties...

[Svanidze, interrupting] What is planned...

[Seleznev, interrupting] In the longer term, the Constitution will have to be put up for discussion so that a new one can be adopted. We do not want to adopt a new Constitution by way of a coup, after all.

[Svanidze] What is planned in place of the presidency?

[Seleznev] Well, if there's no presidency, then there would be a Supreme Soviet, say, as the legislature, and a Council of Ministers with full powers — a strong Council — that would carry out all the functions that the executive should.

[Svanidze] This puts you and Gennadiy Andreyevich Zyuganov in a somewhat curious situation. Gennadiy Andreyevich is a possible presidential candidate, and if he becomes president, he will set about abolishing the presidency. You are the chairman of the Duma and are with him in wanting a new constitution in which there will not be a Duma, but soviets instead. It is as if you will come to power to saw off the very branches on which you will be sitting. What do you say to that?

[Seleznev] Well, if the constitution that we would like to have undergoes a national debate and is widely discussed, and if a referendum decides in favor of adopting it, then of course a date will be set for elections and of course the Duma's term of office will be cut short. After the elections, there would be a new legislative body, and Gennadiy Zyuganov has said quite clearly in one of his interviews that perhaps we are unique in running for president in order to gradually do away with the presidency in Russia, believing it to be alien to our state. [end recording]

[Begin recording] [Video shows Gennadiy Zyuganov, with caption: "Interviewed on 22 December 1995," being questioned by Svanidze off-camera]

[Svanidze] Gennadiy Andreyevich, unless I am mistaken, your party's program contains a clause saying that you are against presidential rule, but that you would retain it for a transitional period. Imagine this situation. Your candidate — or you — win the presidential election. This is a hypothesis [Zyuganov laughs]. What happens next to the presidency?

[Zyuganov] Nikolay Karlovich, something's changed in you. You have even studied our program and found some major subtleties in it...

[Svanidze, interrupting] Gennadiy Andreyevich, I am trained as an historian. I know how to go through a document.

[Zyuganov] If you've changed, then we...

[Svanidze, interrupting] I have known your program for a long time.

[Zyuganov] Let's take a deeper look. We make it quite clear that we are against the presidency in its current form. But we would use the post of president to bring the system of power back to normal. The first task for all of us — imagine for a second that it is not Yeltsin there, but someone else... [changes thought] Open up the section about the presidency and take a look. He can appoint anyone, dismiss anyone, and appeal against anything. But he is not responsible for anything. [end recording]

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[Svanidze] Before coming to power to dump the Constitution, the politically savvy Communists will initially use it at their pleasure. It would be a sin not to take advantage of it. The presidency does indeed enjoy very considerable powers. On the other hand, one could develop a taste for these powers, and the transitional period that Zyuganov speaks of could well become prolonged. The idea of abolishing the presidency does form part of the Communists' policy program. This does not of course have anything to do with Boris Yeltin's performance. In the final analysis, it is the people who pass verdict on the president. If they don't like him, they can elect someone else. And precisely this could let the Communists into power.

But the same thing, that is, the inevitable need to face reelection, is rejected as a matter of principle by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. It is in the political nature and traditions of the Communist Party to make skillful use of democratic institutions to come to power and then cast them aside as they begin to threaten the hold on power. If we digress today from the specific identity of the president, the very institution of democracy is the only thing that ensures a regular handover of power and regular accountability before the people, from which there is no escaping. Abolition of the presidency is a very significant practical step toward lack of change of and control over the authorities. A different matter is whether the communist deputies and Gennadiy Andreyevich Zyuganov himself will be willing to vote for their own abolition in favor of some kind of Supreme Soviet that has yet to be elected.

And will Gennadiy Zyuganov be ready to renounce the presidency if he is elected to it? It is not very likely. We have to assume that the decisive factor will be the correlation of forces between the fairly moderate and pragmatic Zyuganov and Seleznev, on the one side, and the more radically inclined second-rate party functionaries on the other. It is difficult to predict who will gain the upper hand. But that will be Zyuganov's and Seleznev's problem if the Communist Party wins the elections in June. Everyone else will look after their own problems. Goodbye.

Economic Issues

Russia: Implications of Bank Council Election Examined

MM3001102496 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA (Business in Russia Section) in Russian 27 Jan 96 p 10

[Report by Vyacheslav Volobuyev: "Farewell to Old Hands"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The results of the recent election of the Russian Bank for Labor Savings and Credit to the Population [Sberbank] Supervisory Council (as we know, Andrey Kazmin, Russian Federation deputy finance minister, was elected president) force us to conclude that this event goes far beyond the framework of the situation around a commercial bank — albeit the biggest one in the country.

But in order to get a better handle on an event which happened last week, let us make a brief detour into the recent past. Once Gaydar finally left the government the key role in shaping and implementing economic policy fell to A. Chubays and his team — including D. Vasilyev, P. Mostovoy, S. Belyayev, and A. Kokh.

Over the past two years the "St. Petersburg grouping" had a virtual monopoly on drawing up the ground rules and directing the course of privatization and the flotation of state enterprises, creating a stock market, and dealing with the problems of defaulting, solvency, and debts owed to the budget by economic players. In addition, not so long ago "Chubays's man" Vyacheslav Reznik became president of the Russian Main Administration for State Insurance.

Without giving an extensive analysis of the very hard work done by this remarkable collective, I would merely recall that a distinctive feature of the "St. Petersburg" team was its extreme politicization — any criticism was seen as an attack on reform and democracy. Perhaps we were simply doomed to go through this period. At any rate, more than 50 years ago in distant Argentina the Russian philosopher Ivan Solonevich wrote the following lines: "After the USSR we will be offered a great many things. There will be lots of candidates for ministers and leaders, for party leaders, and for military dictators. There will be placemen of banks and trusts — and they will not be ours. There will be placemen of various foreigners. And they will all talk primarily about freedoms — the most fruitful subject for lying, and one which does not commit them to anything...."

Clearly, it was not so much a question of the political transformation of society and the authorities, or of tactical considerations. No, there are some pretty cynical

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views about this — the tasty tidbits controlled by the State Committee for the Management of State Property [GKI] are becoming fewer and fewer, and this means that less and less will depend on that department. In overall terms, the transfer of ownership has been carried out. And this means that those involved are now "surplus to requirements." Not immediately, of course, and not all of them.

For the time being the public is following with a sinking feeling the ins and outs of the election campaign and the top-level reshuffles, and once again — almost unnoticed and without any widely publicized statements, scandals, or other fuss — a new team has emerged which could be called the "Finance Ministry team" (S. Dubinin, V. Panskov, A. Kazmin, S. Aleksashenko, A. Vavilov, and B. Zlatkis) which controls the administrative levers of the country's credit and financial system, and now also the Sberbank's extensive network and huge resources. (It is ironic that the first significant defeat for Chubays, who failed to take account of the "special nature" of privatization in Moscow, was bound up with the Sberbank, which was transferred to GKI administration last May but was soon removed from its clutches by the State Duma).

Hitherto the Finance Ministry and the Central Bank have lived according to their own laws, and credit and monetary policy has been the result of a compromise between these departments — a compromise which has sometimes been very hard to achieve.

It now seems as though a coalition of allies has formed which has a chance of longevity even in the event of a change of president — after all, it is made up of pragmatists and professionals with no links to any particular political party or ideology.

The new situation and its possible advantages and disadvantages will still have to be analyzed, but it is clear that a very important factor has emerged which will have a substantial impact on the country's economic life.

Russia: Creation of Direct Investment Oil Fund Reported

MK3001072696 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 27 Jan 96 p 3

[ANI report: "Direct Investment Oil Fund Founded"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A Direct Investment Oil Fund has been created in Russia to accumulate and invest funds from foreign investors in the Russian oil industry. This has been announced by the "Rosneft" company vice president, Valeriy Fritsler. The fund has been formed by three American finance companies — Torch Energy Advisers, Inc. [preceding four words in English] (the fund's administrative company), Petroleum Management [preceding two words in English] (investment adviser), and Bear, Streans & Co. [preceding four words in English] (shares issue agent). The minimum incorporation capital of the fund is $100 million, and the minimum contribution of members is $3 million. The direct investment fund intends to invest its money in projects involving development of oil and gas deposits and transportation and processing of hydrocarbon raw materials. Targeted for the fund's investments are enterprises with certified reserves of hydrocarbons, ability to export them, potentials sufficient to recoup the fund's investments, and so on. According to Mr. Fritsler, the "Rosneft" company has already joined the fund's shareholders by contributing $3 million.

Russia: Coal Industry Conference Sets Objectives

MM3001104596 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 29 Jan 96 p 7

[Protocol of 23 January conference on the situation in the coal industry chaired by the Russian Federation Government chairman: "On Measures To Stabilize the Situation in the Coal Industry. Miners Will Receive Help"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A conference which discussed the situation in the coal industry was held 23 January 1996 under the chairmanship of the chairman of the Russian Federation Government.

The participants included the leaders of ministries, departments, and major coal mining enterprises; representatives of the State Duma and administrations of coal mining regions; and leaders of the coal miners trade union. The conference resulted in protocol which determines measures to stabilize the situation in the coal industry.

The conference noted:

1. The timetable for financing the coal industry from the federal budget in 1995 was largely fulfilled. At the same time the protocols of conferences chaired by A.N. Chubays on 29 November 1995 (No. ACH-P14-138pr) and 15 January 1996 (No. ACH-P14-4pr) were not fulfilled in terms of the additional allocation of budget funds for the coal sector;

the question of funding the sector in 1996 was not resolved; according to Russian Ministry of Economics calculations the shortfall in budget funds totals approximately 3 trillion rubles [R];

the financial situation of joint-stock and other companies remains critical. The main reason is unpaid bills by coal

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consumers, first and foremost the electricity industry (R1.8 trillion), enterprises in the metallurgical complex (R0.5 trillion), and enterprises in the agro-industrial complex, and the municipal economy. Consumers failed to pay up R4.2 trillion for coal dispatched to them;

as a result of the nonpayment of bills by consumers and the shortage of budget funds a considerable proportion of enterprises in the sector do not have circulating capital of their own. Delays in wage payments to miners are approaching three months and more;

there has been a considerable slowdown in work to modernize the sector and close enterprises and production facilities which are particular loss-makers;

recently miners' collectives have seen a sharp increase in social tension, mainly because of the late payment of wages.

The conference instructed:

2. The Russian Ministry of Finance (V.A. Petrov) is to ensure that by the end of January 1996 the "Rosugol" state enterprise is to be allocated R570-600 billion out of 1996 federal budget funds envisaged for state support for coal industry enterprises and organizations.

3. The Russian Ministry of Finance (V.A. Petrov), the Russian Ministry of Economics (Ya.M. Urinson), the Russian Ministry of Fuel and Energy (Yu.K. Shafranik), and the "Rosugol" state enterprise (Yu.N. Malyshev) are to prepare within two weeks and submit an agreed draft Russian Federation Government decision stipulating the terms and dates for the allocation to the "Rosugol" state enterprise in 1996 of financial resources to the sum of R10.4 trillion, including R7.4 trillion from the federal budget, R400 billion in the first quarter of 1996 in addition to the expenditure envisaged by the federal budget for 1996 out of repaid debts for 1995, and also International Bank for Reconstruction and Development credits in the sum of $250 million, credit lines in the sum of $141.2 million from the British Department of Export Credit Guarantees, and a German "Hermes" credit line in the sum of 129.1 million German marks.

4. The Russian Ministry of Economics (Ya.M. Urinson), the Russian Ministry of Fuel and Energy (Yu.K. Shafranik), and the Russian Ministry of Finance (V.A. Petrov) are to ensure the completion on their own responsibility of work to raise an IBRD loan and channel it into additional funding of the coal sector in 1996 over and above the sum envisaged by the federal budget for state support for the coal industry.

5. The Russian Ministry of Fuel and Energy (Yu.K. Shafranik) and the "Rosugol" state enterprises (Yu.N. Malyshev), by agreement with the Russian Ministry of Economics, the Russian Ministry of Finance, sector trade unions, the administrations of the main coal mining regions, and also the State Legal Administration of the Russian federation President are to submit within two weeks a draft Russian Federation Presidential Edict "On Measures To Further Improve the Structure of the Russian Federation Coal Industry."

6. The Russian Ministry of Finance (V.A. Petrov), the Russian Ministry of Economics (Ya.M. Urinson), the Russian Ministry of Fuel and Energy (Yu.K. Shafranik), and the "Rosugol" state enterprise are to submit within two weeks agreed proposals on the question of extending Paragraph 7 of Russian Federation Government Decree No. 1245 of 19 December 1995, which applies to organizations producing output for federal state needs, to enterprises engaged in the mining and processing of coal in terms of authorizing the channeling of up to 50 percent of moneys received into their current accounts into the payment of wages and other urgent needs.

7. The Interdepartmental Commission for the Socioeconomic Problems of Coal-Mining Regions (Ya.M. Urinson) is to submit to the Russian Federation Government within one month proposals for a mine closure procedure ensuring the comprehensive resolution of questions when eliminating unviable loss-making coal-mining enterprises, drawing special attention to ensuring the social protection of miners, including to the features of employer compensation for the damage caused to workers by accidents and professional injuries.

8. The Russian Ministry of Fuel and Energy (Yu.K. Shafranik), the Gosgortekhnadzor [State Mining Safety Inspectorate] of Russia (M.P. Vasilchuk), and the "Rosugol" state enterprise (Yu.N. Malyshev), are to submit to the Russian Federation Government within one month agreed proposals to ensuring safe mining operations and the protection of miners' labor.

9. The Russian Ministry of Finance (V.A. Petrov), the Russian Ministry of Economics (Ya.M. Urinson), the Russian Ministry of Fuel and Energy (Yu.K. Shafranik), and the "Rosugol" state enterprises (Yu.N. Malyshev) are to send a group of experts to the city of Vorkuta by 1 February to examine on the spot questions raised at the conference by the chairman of the Vorkuta Territorial Committee of the Miners Trade Union (Yu.L. Vishnevskiy), and inform the Russian Federation Government of the results.

10. The Russian Ministry of Finance (V.A. Petrov) is to ensure that the housing stock transferred by coal industry enterprises to municipal ownership is financed out of the federal budget funds allocated to the regions for this purpose.

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11. The Russian Ministry of Economics (Ye.G. Yasin), the Russian Ministry of Finance (V.A. Petrov), and the Russian Ministry of Fuel and Energy are to prepare within 10 days and submit to the Russian Federation Government in accordance with the prescribed procedure proposals to solve the problem of unpaid bills in sectors of the fuel and energy complex.

12. The RAO YEES of Russia (A.F. Dyakov) and the Russian Committee for Metallurgy (S.Z. Afonin) are to adopt measures to eliminate coal industry enterprises' debts for delivered products. The government is to be informed of the results in the first quarter of 1996.

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International Affairs

Ukraine: Statement Commends START II Ratification in U.S.

LD2901145496 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1330 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — "We hope that the process of nuclear disarmament which Ukraine helped to launch will deepen considerably after the important step taken by the U.S. Senate," says a statement issued by the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry following ratification of the START II Treaty in the U.S. Senate. "We trust that the Russian Federation will, for its part, ratify the START II Treaty without delay," it adds.

"Ukraine would like to express its satisfaction with the step taken by the U.S. Senate. It is a well-known fact that Ukraine has made a large contribution to implementation of the START I Treaty, eliminating the world's third largest nuclear capability consistently and in full accordance with its unilateral pledges and international commitments. Over 70 percent of all nuclear warheads deployed in Ukraine have already been removed and await dismantling," the statement says.

Kuchma Hopes Russia-Ukraine Treaty Will Be Signed Soon

LD2901200296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1848 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Jan 29 (INTERFAX-UKRAINE) — Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma hopes that a comprehensive friendship and cooperation treaty with Russia will be signed shortly.

"I want it signed in March," he told journalists at the National Media-Club in Kiev Monday.

Kuchma confirmed that Russian President Boris Yeltsin also told him that a comprehensive treaty will be signed soon.

"I have repeatedly spoken of equal relations with Russia," Kuchma said.

Kuchma recalled that Yeltsin had recently called for equal relations between Russia and the European Union. "I want this kind of relations with Russia," Kuchma said.

Kuchma added that he expects good results from the visit of the Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov to Kiev on January 31.

Ukraine: President Kuchma Sets Up Foreign Investment Council

LD2901185096 Kiev Radio Ukraine World Service in Ukrainian 1600 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma has signed a decree, setting up a consultative council on foreign investment issues attached to the Cabinet of Ministers, to be chaired by Prime Minister Yevheniy Marchuk. The president's press office explained that the new body will work on proposals to make market reforms more vigorous, ensure favorable conditions for attracting foreign capital to Ukraine, and hasten its integration in the world economy.

Ukrainian, Russian Customs Officials Hold Talks in Sochi

LD2901173596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1524 GMT 29 Jan 96

["INTERFAX-UKRAINE" news item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kyiv, January 29 (INTERFAX-UKRAINE) — The heads of the Ukrainian and Russian customs and border departments have started negotiations in Sochi (Russia). They are discussing the prospects of interaction of their services.

This was disclosed to "IF-U" at the press-service of the Ukrainian State Border Guarding Committee.

The Ukrainian side is represented at the talks by Chairman of the State Border Committee Viktor Bannykh and Chairman of the State Customs Committee Leonid Derkach; the Russian side — by General of the Army Andrey Nikolayev, Director of the Federal Border Service.

Ukrainian-Russian Border Protocols Signed

LD2901133696 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1130 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — Protocols on the operation of checkpoints on the Ukrainian-Russian border and on exercising joint border and customs control at checkpoints have been signed at negotiations in Sochi between the leaders of the State Customs Committee of Ukraine, the State Customs Committee of the Russian Federation, the State Committee for Defense of Ukrainian State Borders, and the Federal Border Service of the Russian Federation.

The press service of the State Customs Committee told UNIAN that the protocols provide for the best possible operation of the existing road, railway, and water transport border checkpoints.

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Leonid Derkach, chairman of the State Customs Committee of Ukraine, believes Ukraine's decision not to join the CIS customs union is not an obstacle in the way of an all-round expansion of cooperation between Ukraine and Russia and further establishment of contacts between the citizens and enterprises of the two countries.

Ukraine: Prime Minister To Attend World Economic Forum

WS3001123796 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0828 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, Jan. 28 — Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk, along with several ministers and industrial leaders, will represent Ukraine at the World Economic Forum which is being held in Davos, Switzerland Feb. 1-4.

According to a spokesman from the Cabinet of Ministers, Marchuk is expected to meet with officials from the World Bank. In addition, the Prime Minister will hold bilateral talks with several heads of state, including the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, and Uzbekistani President Islam Karimov.

Also scheduled are meetings with Norwegian Prime Minister Grew Harlem Brundtland, the Chairman of Russian Duma Gennadiy Seleznev, South African Vice President Thabo Mbeki, and Tunisian Prime Minister Hamed Karoui.

Ukraine: Peacekeepers, Equipment Head for Angola

LD2901174096 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1330 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khmelnitskiy Region — A train carrying the first of 200 Ukrainian peacekeepers and their equipment due for Angola left the Ukrainian engineer troop training center in Kamenets-Podolskiy for Nikolayev on 29 January. The remaining servicemen from the engineer bridge-building subunit, which will be taking part in the UN peacekeeping operations, will join their colleagues on 30 January.

Once in Nikolayev, they will take a plane to Angola, while their equipment will travel by sea.

"The subunit will be billeted in the town of (Melanza,) 440 km away from Luanda, the capital of Angola," subunit commander Colonel Oleksandr Pinchuk told UNIAN. "We will join peacekeepers from Korea, India, and Brazil to build bridges, roads, and other communications for UN forces."

The subunit will be replaced in six months.

Ukraine: Southern Marine District Formed on Basis of BSF

LD2901202196 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1810 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sevastopol — A Ukrainian fleet structure is being formed on the basis of Black Sea Fleet naval base units and sub-units, which are being accepted in accordance with the bilateral accord between Ukraine and Russia. A UNIAN news agency correspondent reports that the southern marine district is now being set up. It includes offshore defense units, missile patrol boats, amphibious warfare ships, other units, and special rear and technical support sub-units. The formation of a separate missile unit and other Ukrainian Navy structures is under way.

UNIAN has learned at the Ukrainian Navy press center that on 29 January both sides signed acts on the acceptance and transfer of 111 facilities out of 130, which are being accepted by the Ukrainian Navy. Work on acceptance of the large amphibious warfare ship Konstantin Olshanskiy, the search and rescue vessels Taman and Baskunchak, a hydrographic vessel and others is close to completion.

National Affairs

Ukraine: Kuchma Meets Media Club, Comments on Censorship

LD2901212296 Kiev UT-1 Television Network in Ukrainian 1900 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma met representatives of the Ukrainian Media Club today.

The meeting at the Media Club took place at the journalists' request, mostly representatives of nonstate and foreign mass media. The subject was the development of democracy and freedom of speech in Ukraine. Those present pledged not to quote or retell anything that was said by the president or to the president. This was necessary for the sake of a frank dialogue, although officially a few words were said after the meeting. The first reply to the question — is there political censorship in Ukraine? — summed up the subject discussed.

[Begin Kuchma recording] I am categorically against (?complaints) about political censorship in Ukraine. If someone does play the hero sometimes, then I have no grounds to deny this. But games, political games or any games, have existed and exist, and most probably will exist. One should simply draw the conclusion from this that one should not allow them to expand, but bring them within the framework of the rules. My wish for

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the press is that it should cooperate, above all, with the president and the executive authority [laughs] for the development of the Ukrainian state. [end recording] [passage omitted on miners' strike]

Kuchma on National Security, Russia, Constitution

LD2901222496 Kiev UNIAR in Ukrainian 2000 GMT 29 Jan 96

[News conference of Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma with unidentified correspondents at Ukrainian Media Club in Kiev on 29 January]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Are you going to make work on adopting the final version of a national security concept more active? And when?

[Kuchma] This issue is not so much for me, because it involves many laws that now really need to be — from whatever point of view, be it the economic or the political, which is truly difficult for me. [sentence as received] I initiate many issues with the Supreme Council leadership. I will note this too and have another try.

[Correspondent] As a chairman of the constitutional commission, do you support the proposal of the newly created working group that the prime minister head the government? Or, on the contrary, do you support the opinion, which is held within the constitutional commission, that is, the introduction of the post of vice president?

[Kuchma] I am in favor of the prime minister.

[Correspondent] What results do you expect from [Russian Foreign Minister] Yevgeniy Primakov's visit?

[Kuchma] Good ones, both for Russia and Ukraine.

[Correspondent] Does this mean that a treaty will be signed in Moscow?

[Kuchma] I want this. I think we will still sign this treaty. Both Ukraine and Russia need it. In the last few days, I saw Boris Yeltsin's interview, in which he said that he is in favor of equal partnership relations both with NATO and the European community. I also say that if we have relations on equal terms, we will definitely sign all treaties necessary for normal cooperation between the states.

[Correspondent] The subject of our conversation is not closed, but what was said is. To sum up your point of view for the camera, is there political censorship in Ukraine, and what are your wishes for the press?

[Kuchma] I am categorically against assertions with regard to political censorship in Ukraine. If someone plays the hero sometimes, then I have no grounds to deny this. But games, political ones or any type of games, have existed, do exist, and will exist. One should simply draw conclusions from this, and not allow them to expand, but bring them within the framework of the rules.

My wishes for the press are for it to cooperate, above all with the president and executive authority, for the development of the Ukrainian state.

[Correspondent] Some deputies express the opinion that the constitution will not be adopted at this session. What foundation do their statements have?

[Kuchma] There is sense in them, because I consider that most deputies do not believe that the constitution can be adopted at the Supreme Council, although I am in favor of it being adopted there.

[Correspondent] Your representative in parliament Viktor Musiyaka said there is a certain tendency toward adopting a constitution before the Russian presidential election. To what extent is this true?

[Kuchma] He is right to some extent. It is better for us to have a constitution before then.

[Correspondent] What will your reaction be if the Supreme Council expresses no confidence in the finance minister?

[Kuchma] The president should act in accordance with the constitutional agreement, but I think that in order to take such a decision, one should have serious grounds for it. Although I myself have complaints about the work of the Finance Ministry, this does not mean that changes have to be made to the ministry's leadership.

[Correspondent] Are any personnel changes planned in the government? For example, in the Defense Ministry?

[Kuchma] On some issues, yes, but not with regard to the defense minister. There are no grounds to dismiss Valeriy Shmarov.

[Correspondent] What is the situation in the coal sector now? There is a miners strike planned for 1 February. What are you and the government going to do? Will there be inflation because of the payment of wages to miners?

[Kuchma] First, we do not have the moral right to allow this strike. It would be loss-making for the economy. Arrears have reached astronomical sums and the causes for this are well-known. On 30 January, I will be holding a meeting on these issues, and the government has been instructed to examine them. Therefore, the finance minister, together with the National Bank of Ukraine, should be thinking about how to resolve this issue via non-emission sources.

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[Correspondent] Has Ukraine altered its positions on division of the Black Sea Fleet?

[Kuchma] Ukraine is not renouncing anything. There are agreements, and we are working according to them. The question is the status of the Russian Black Sea Fleet and the conditions that need to be resolved. There are practically no other issues now.

Ukraine: Franchuk Favors Subordination of Crimean Government

LD2901184896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1648 GMT 29 Jan 96

["INTERFAX-UKRAINE" news item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Simferopol, January 29 (INTERFAX-UKRAINE) — Ukrainian People's Deputy Anatoliy Franchuk, former Head of Crimean Government, said he would favour "subordination of the Crimean Government to the Ukrainian Cabinet".

"Kiev will all the same have to do it sooner or later", he told newsmen in Simferopol on Monday.

The Government of Crimea was already once under the direct authority of the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers — from March 31 to August 19, 1995. The Crimean Government is currently subordinated to the autonomy's Supreme Council, and the Crimean Prime Minister is appointed by Crimea's Parliament in agreement with the President of Ukraine.

"The situation in the Crimean Government is abnormal now", said A. Franchuk, who resigned on December 8 last year.

He expressed the view that a kind of "haste" in the change of the Prime Minister, which, according to him, is necessary for some deputies in the Crimean Parliament, "is connected with privatization".

A. Franchuk said that he could forecast further aggravation of the situation in Crimea, which, would entail a change in the autonomy's Government and Supreme Council.

The Crimean Parliament Presidium is expected to decide by Monday evening about four candidates for the office of Crimean Prime Minister.

Crimean Parliament Debates Candidates for Premiership

LD2901173696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1503 GMT 29 Jan 96

["INTERFAX-UKRAINE" news item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Simferopol, January 29 (INTERFAX-UKRAINE) — The Supreme Council of Crimea is debating candidatures for the post of the autonomy's head of government.

As an "IF-U" correspondent reports, a meeting of the Parliamentary Presidium, leaders of deputy groups and heads of parliamentary committees is discussing programs of six candidates. Among them are: former Simferopol City Council Chairman and Crimea's Minister of Social Security Volodymyr Lavrynenko; former Simferopol Mayor Vyacheslav Yurov, director of the "Fiolent" works Leonid Batalin; chairman of the "Druzhba Narodov" agricultural firm Vasyl Kyselev, and the two current Crimean Vice Premiers Arkadiy Demydenko and Andriy Senchenko.

The debate will be followed by a discussion of the candidatures in groups of deputies, and then, four candidates will be approved at a Presidium meeting in the evening.

On January 30, candidates running for the Premier's office will be invited to a meeting of the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers.

The Prime Minister of Crimea shall be appointed by the Crimean Supreme Council in coordination with the President of Ukraine.

Ukraine: No Confidence Issue in Finance Minister 'Incorrect'

LD2901185396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1648 GMT 29 Jan 96

["INTERFAX-UKRAINE" news item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, January 29 (INTERFAX-UKRAINE) — The Ukrainian Ministry of Finance describes as incorrect the intention of Ukraine's Parliament Presidium to discuss a draft resolution on no-confidence vote in the country's Finance Minister Petro Hermanchuk.

The draft resolution is to be examined by the Verkhovna Rada Presidium on Monday. It has been prepared by the parliamentary standing committee in charge of finance and banking operations, which believes that it was P. Hermanchuk's unsatisfactory administration of the Finance Ministry, that led to failure to comply with the Law "Of the 1995 state budget" in the part of ensuring budgetary balance, and to a considerable backlog in wages.

"The general economic situation in the country has prevented from implementing the state budget", "IF-U" was told by a Finance Ministry's official. Among the causes behind non-fulfillment of the 1995 state budget, he called slow privatization rate. "Small privatization

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depended on the stand of local councils. Denationalization has also been hampered by the fact that privatization program was not passed in due time", the source said.

Ukraine: Defense Minister Replaced as Export Commission Head

LD2901135196 Kiev UNIAR in Ukrainian 1215 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — The Cabinet of Ministers has appointed Deputy Prime Minister Anatoliy Kinakh as chairman of the government export control commission, replacing [Minister of Defense] Valeriy Shmarov.

Ukraine: Vice PM Visits Finland; Discusses Police Cooperation

AU2901171896 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian 26 Jan 96 p 2

[Unattributed report from Helsinki: "Mutual Assistance in Extraordinary Situations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A Ukrainian delegation headed by Ukrainian Vice Prime Minister Vasyl Durdynets arrived in Helsinki at the invitation of Finland's Ministry of Internal Affairs.

As the Ukrainian Embassy in Helsinki told UKRINFORM, the main objective of the visit is to establish direct contacts with the leadership, to learn about experience in the work to combat organized crime and prevent violations of the law, and to study the system and organization of search and rescue operations.

During talks between V. Durdynets and Finnish Interior Minister J. Enestam, possibilities for cooperation were considered between corresponding bodies of the two countries within the framework of the "Partnership for Peace" program. The question of concluding an agreement on cooperation and mutual assistance in the event of extraordinary situations and also in the sphere of combating organized crime was also considered.

The program for the visit also envisages tours of an educational institution and a test site of the Finnish Interior Ministry where specialists in search and rescue work are trained.

Ukraine: Patriarch, State Officials Discuss Religious Affairs

AU2901173196 Kiev URYADOVYY KURYER in Ukrainian 25 Jan 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "A Substantive Conversation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] As UKRINFORM was told by the Kiev Patriarchate's Press Service, Most Holy Filaret, patriarch of Kiev and All Ukraine and head of the Kiev Patriarchate Ukrainian Orthodox Church, received Dmytro Tabachnyk, head of the Ukrainian Presidential Administration, and A. Koval, head of the State Committee for Religious Affairs, in his official residence.

Dmytro Tabachnyk conveyed to the Most Holy Patriarch Filaret birthday greetings from Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma. They held a substantive and sincere talk on the present state of relations between the state and the church and on the problem of creating the National Local Orthodox Church in Ukraine.

Ukraine Powerplant Hopes To Sell Electricity To Raise Funds

AU2901173296 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian 25 Jan 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "It Is Better To Solve Questions Tete-a-Tete"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma is expected to visit Zaporizhzhya Oblast. His crowded program also includes a trip to Enerhodar and to the atomic plant. It cannot be ruled out that, precisely during the Ukrainian President's visit to the Zaporizhzhya AES [Atomic Electric Power Plant], the request by the Oblast State Administration will finally be positively solved. It is asked that the Zaporizhzhya AES be allowed to sell electricity, produced by the sixth power unit, to earn the necessary funds amounting to 22.9 trillion karbovantsi for completing the building of the AES complex and for commissioning social infrastructure facilities as envisaged by the project

Ukraine: Black Sea Fleet To Transfer 'Scout' Ships

LD2901191796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1744 GMT 29 Jan 96

["INTERFAX-UKRAINE" news item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sevastopol. January 29. (INTERFAX-UKRAINE) — The Black Sea Fleet [BSF] Command has decided to transfer the brigade of BSF scout ships from the settlement of Mirnyi to

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Novorosiisk and Temriuk. The passage of the ships is scheduled for April, 1996.

Th was disclosed to IF-U [INTERFAX-UKRAINE] by sources at the BSF headquarters.

Currently, as is noted by military sources in Sevastopol, close to the Naval Staff of Ukraine, an intensive lift of materiel from Mirnyi to the Russian territory is underway.

In conformity with Ukrainian-Russian BSF-splitting accords, the Mirnyi settlement is to be turned over to the Ukrainian side.

Economic Issues

Russia: Border Guards Official Laments Lack of Financing

OW2901134396 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel and Orbita Networks in Russian 1900 GMT 25 Jan 96

[Lidiya Lashchenko video report; from the "Border" feature of the "TeleUtro" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Presently, one cannot win simply through numbers and skill. This was vividly demonstrated by recent events in the country. We need a well-provisioned combat-ready army that enjoys the proper footwear, uniforms, and food and has sufficient quantities of modern equipment at its disposal. If the people cannot feed their own army they will be feeding somebody else's army! We hardly want this, but what do we have in reality? The new year, 1996, has begun. The Federal Border Service, the country's shield, cannot properly solve the tasks facing it. [video shows montage of shots of Russian Border troops in the field, at border posts, and on helicopters; then cuts to show Lashchenko interviewing Lieutenant General S. N. Karasev, first deputy chief for armaments of the Russian Federation Border Guards, in an office]

[Begin Karasev recording] A considerable part of available armaments have outlived their service life as a result of inadequate financing in the past three or four years. Today, up to 20 percent of available ships, up to 40 percent of automotive and armored equipment, and up to 50 percent of signals equipment are not combat capable. [end recording]

If things continue this way, we will have to begin using old, antiquated methods for protecting the borders, and this in the age of technical progress! The military is not asking for complete financing, this is not realistic for the country during these hard economic times.

[Begin Karasev recording] We are talking about smoothly functioning financing. After all, defense enterprises, which are fulfilling Federal Border Service orders, cannot work for 10 days, say, and then stand idle for a month. [end recording]

The border guards propose using cheaper versions of armaments when possible when purchasing new equipment. For example, using light aircraft for border defense and using motorcycles where possible instead of motor vehicles. We need to change from expensive border defense signalling systems to all kinds of sensors, optical, and electronic systems, and radar stations — necessity is the mother of invention, they say.

However it is impossible to simply exchange expensive equipment for cheap devices. While the Finance Ministry is portioning out finances bit by bit...

[Begin recording] [Karasev picks up sentence] ...commanders in the field are forced to decrease the allocation of resources for the practical training of personnel and combat training. This in turn has an effect on the combat readiness of troops; brings about the premature failure of equipment; and leads to increased trauma, including combat deaths. [end recording]

Experimental design work is not being carried out and only work begun five to seven years ago is being completed. So the Federal Border Service's scientific and technical potential is basically engaged with survival problems.

Ukraine: Russia Blamed for 'Impasse' in Oil Transit Talks

AU2901154596 Bratislava NARODNA OBRODA in Slovak 25 Jan 96 pp 1, 2

[Report by Blazej Panik: "Talks on Oil Transit Deadlocked"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev/Bratislava — The Ukrainian-Russian talks on fees for the transit of Russian oil across the territory of Ukraine, which started in Kiev on Monday [22 January], reached an impasse yesterday, CTK announced. Because of disputes over transit fees, oil ceased flowing through the "Friendship" oil pipeline at the beginning of this year and oil deliveries to Slovakia were resumed only after Slovak Ambassador Roman Paldan's urgent talks with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yuriy Yarov in Moscow.

The Russian side claims that the interruption in oil supplies to Slovakia and the Czech Republic at the beginning of this year was caused by inordinate Ukrainian demands for higher transit fees. Speaking to the NARODNA OBRODA correspondent in the High Tatra on Tuesday [23 January], Serhiy Osyka, Ukrainian minister of external economic relations and trade, said, however,

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that the reason dwelled in Russia's noncompliance with previously agreed commitments.

According to Osyka, under the free trade agreement between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, Moscow was to abolish virtually all export duties for goods exported to Ukraine, but it claims exemption for as many as 180 items, including oil and gas. Kiev, on the other hand, has abolished all export duties in relation to Russia.

"We are losing some $2 billion a year by unilaterally observing the agreement," Osyka said, adding that, according to its memorandum with the IMF, Russia was to abolish export duties by 1 January 1996. According to the Ukrainian minister, the whole problem regarding the transit of Russian oil is becoming a "tradition" because "Russia traditionally applies discriminatory trade measures in relation to Ukraine and Ukraine traditionally refuses to become reconciled to this." In a situation when the Russian side delivers oil to Ukraine for such high prices and when, moreover, it insists on export duties, Osyka continued, the Ukrainian side logically insists on higher fees for transit across its territory.

"All the more so as our transit fees are the lowest in Europe," the Ukrainian minister stressed to NARODNA OBRODA.

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Belarus

Belarus: Russian Foreign Minister Primakov's Visit Detailed

WS3001085296 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0753 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] BELAPAN has received information about the itinerary for Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov who will stay in Minsk from January 30-31 on an official visit. He arrives at the Minsk-2 airport at 12 p.m. [1000 GMT] on January 30. At 14.15 negotiations between Mr. Primakov and his Belarusian counterpart Uladzimir Syanko will start. Then Mr. Primakov will take part in a wreath-laying ceremony on Victory Square. On the same day the Russian minister will be received by President Alyaksandr Lukashenka. Negotiations with Prime Minister Mikhail Chyhir are scheduled for 5.45 p.m.; negotiations with CIS Executive Secretary Ivan Karatchenya — for 6.40 p.m. On January 31, at 9.30 a.m. Mr. Primakov will meet with Supreme Soviet Chairman Syamyon Sharetski. A press conference on the results of the visit is to start at 10.30 a.m. Before leaving Belarus the Russian minister intends to visit the Khatyn memorial [site of the execution of Polish officers by Soviet Army during WW II]. At 2.30 p.m. the head of the Russian foreign office is to leave from the Minsk-1 airport for Kiev.

Lukashenka's Statement on Missiles 'Not an Instruction'

LD2901181396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1609 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MINSK, Jan 29 (INTERFAX-WEST) — The Belarussian president's statement that Russian missiles with nuclear warheads may return to Belarus must be perceived only as a statement by a single person, independent from his post, the chairman of the parliamentary commission for international affairs, Petr Kravchenko, told a press conference in Minsk Monday.

"This is only a statement, not an instruction," Kravchenko added.

Belarussian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka had stated at the latest CIS summit in Moscow that Russian missiles could be redeployed in Belarus, if NATO expanded to the East.

Kravchenko recalled that Belarus had committed itself to withdraw or destroy all nuclear arms. The remaining 16 out of 81 Russian missiles are to leave Belarus by September 3, 1996.

Belarus: Ministry Rejects Ex-Chief's Remarks on Uranium Compensation

MM2901153596 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 27 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Valeriy Kovalev: "Belarusian Foreign Ministry Refutes Its Former Chief's Statement"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Minsk — An interview with Pyatr Kravchanka, former foreign minister of the Republic of Belarus and now deputy of the Supreme Council, was published in a number of central Belarusian newspapers recently. Its topic is revealed in the headline: "The Belarusian People Are Entitled to Compensation for the Uranium in Tactical and Strategic Missiles."

The ex-minister decided in this way to direct the public's attention to the "uranium problem" which arose as a result of the withdrawal of strategic nuclear forces from Belarusian territory. According to his calculations the republic is entitled to claim payment of compensation for the uranium-containing missile warheads removed to Russia to the tune of some $1.5 billion. However, the Russians, the former Foreign Ministry chief stated, have done and are doing everything possible either to avoid paying this sum at all, or else to reduce its size considerably. The Belarusian side has in the past 18 months (meaning since Kravchanka left his post) been behaving "very sluggishly and without initiative" at the talks on this matter. And in his opinion it is the present political leadership of Belarus that is to blame. Had it shown firmness and will, he says, "the talks in Moscow might have gone much more successfully." A perfectly transparent hint: The present authorities are not showing zeal on behalf of the Belarusian people, they are prepared to waive the people's interests in order not to annoy "big brother" unintentionally.

The statement by the former head of the foreign policy department did not go unnoticed at the republic's Foreign Ministry. Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Khvostov [name as transliterated] told journalists at a briefing that Mr. Kravchanka's assertion that Russia should pay $1.5 billion for the uranium removed from Belarusian territory "can impress only those who do not have the full information on this matter." According to him, this sum has never once figured in the bilateral talks, because it is "patently overstated." Khvostov also stated that work to resolve the problem of "uranium compensation" is continuing at the level of experts and that there have been "notable developments" recently.

Judging by these remarks, the sides will eventually manage to find a compromise. It is hardly in Russia's interests to fan the flames of opposition to Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka. Especially since the

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money received by Belarus for the uranium will most likely be used to extinguish the debt for Russian energy sources supplied to the republic. At present that debt totals some $300 million.

Polish Premier's Aid Takes Interest in Belarusian Developments

WS2901155896 Minsk BTK Television Network in Belarusian 1900 GMT 26 Jan 96

[Video report by A. Litvinawa]

[FBIS Translated Text] Many issues were discussed at today's meeting between Belarusian Supreme Soviet Deputy Chairman Henadz Karpenka and Andrzej Drawicz, the Polish prime minister's adviser for foreign policy issues. What was Mr. Drawicz primarily interested in?

[Begin Karpenka recording in Russian] He was primarily interested in the current developments in the Belarusian parliament, relations between the legislative and executive authorities in our Republic, and about our parliament's vision of further development of relations with the neighboring states, primarily the Polish Republic. [end recording]

Andrzej Drawicz pointed out that despite certain political and economic problems, our Republic remains independent and continues to conduct a peaceful policy with regard to its neighbors, which is the most valuable thing for any state. Mr. Drawicz expressed interest in Belarus, while the Belarusian side was very interested in the scandal involving Polish Prime Minister Jozef Oleksy.

[Begin Drawicz recording in Russian] I do not have any access to any materials of special significance. I believe that this is a temporary situation. In general, the accusations leveled at the prime minister are very serious. I am deeply convinced that those accusations will not be proved, that is, I believe that it will turn out that the premier has never been any kind of spy. Unfortunately, this outstanding politician, who is also a very smart and noble man, will have to lower his status, at least temporarily. [end recording]

Belarus: Electoral Commission Head Removed, Budget Discussed

WS3001120496 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 1100 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A plenary session of the Belarusian Supreme Soviet held in Minsk continues today. Deputies are discussing one of the primary issues which should be resolved in the immediate future: the 1996 budget. Prime Minister Syarhey Linh delivered a speech on this issue back on 17 January. Today, deputies heard a speech by the acting chairman of Belarus' National Bank. It took almost an hour for Nikalay Kuzmichow to acquaint the legislators with the monetary-credit policy. It took him another hour to answer to deputies' questions.

At the beginning of the afternoon session, Alyaksandr Abramovich was removed from the post of Central Electoral Commission head. A resolution was passed on this issue. The session is continuing its work.

Belarus: CIS Executive Secretary on Issues, Russian Elections

WS3001084796 Minsk BELORUSSKAYA DELOVAYA GAZETA in Russian 22 Jan 96 p 4

[Interview with CIS Executive Secretary Ivan Karatchenya by S. Kalinkina; place and date not given: "If Russia Stumbles Over...." — first paragraph is BELORUSSKAYA DELOVAYA GAZETA introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Moscow summit has left an impression of uncertainty and indefiniteness. Boris Yeltsin remains figure No. 1. The disruption in formerly close ties between the states remains problem No. 1. Question No. 1 is what will take place next? In search for an answer, we turned to CIS Executive Secretary Ivan Karatchenya.

[Kalinkina] Those who consider that it is necessary to find ways for cooperation within the CIS and those who adhere to a concept of creating new interstate formations collided again at the Moscow summit. Do you think that Nursultan Nazarbayev, as before, is determined to support his approach — the establishment of a Eurasian Union?

[Karatchenya] I think that the concept of establishing a Eurasian Union will not be forgotten by either Nazarbayev himself, or his entourage. Nursultan Abishevich will likely repeatedly recall this concept at the highest level. Nursultan Nazarbayev belongs to a category of statesmen who, having assessed the situation and adopted a decision, do not part easily with it.

[Kalinkina] Having blocked the Kazakh statement addressing, among other things, the impossibility of denouncing the Belaya Vezha agreements, the CIS member-states presidents played into the hands of Boris Yeltsin, because no one expressed his opinion unambiguously regarding what had taken place in Viskuli once [a Belarusian governmental residence where the Belaya Vezha agreement was signed in 1991].

[Karatchenya] At meetings, in corridors, and during receptions, the issue of Russian presidential elections

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was in the air. Discussions were conducted as to how the incumbent Russian president could be supported provided that he would agree to run in the presidential elections; some kind of advice was proposed; and some states even pledged to do something. Let us state frankly: If Russia stumbles over, if this giant goes backwards, life will not be easy on the outskirts of the former USSR as well. Therefore, there are no indifferent people regarding what processes are currently taking place in Russia and what forces will come to power there. Naturally, given such a situation, everyone supports Yeltsin.

[Kalinkina] Russia will again perform the role of CIS chairman. But the situation in this country will remain uncertain until presidential elections are held. Will this not lead to a situation when the development of the CIS is stopped and everything is halted for the next six months or some other timeframe while waiting for the next Russian president?

[Karatchenya] I exclude this option. Current tendencies show that documents, perhaps their general guidelines, addressing the customs and the payment unions — which will unite not only three, but five, six, seven states — will be drafted by May. Both Azerbaijan and Moldova are considering accession to the Customs Union. They do not regard it as a kind of easy admission, but they are preparing for this. A Russian statesman who will use integration slogans in elections will profit from such CIS processes.

[Kalinkina] As experience shows, the card of the revival of a great, rich state and of a happy past is always used during election campaigns.... Do you expect that the Russian leadership will launch any initiatives regarding the deepening of the integration within the CIS framework?

[Karatchenya] Yes, I expect this. In addition, I believe that this will not be a simple political maneuver, and relevant initiatives will be continued in the future, against any distribution of forces. Today communists themselves (both Zyuganov and representatives of the Belarusian Supreme Soviet left majority) do not say that it is necessary to eliminate everything that had been done and return to the past. Hence, it is precisely the CIS where one must find ways to resolve the economic crisis caused by mutual isolation.

[Kalinkina] Great concern was voiced at the time over the fact that Russia is playing the role of CIS leader. A document on keeping peace in the CIS has been signed and experts have begun to discuss the same issues: Domestic Russian conflicts (for example, Chechnya) can become a burden for other CIS states. What do you think about this?

[Karatchenya] Such conflicts have already gone beyond the Russian borders. Turkey and Dagestan have also been "involved." The terrorism began in Abkhazia. Even Georgian President Shevarnadze stated boldly: Developments in Budennovsk, Kizlyar, and Pervomayskoye are links of the chain which began in Abkhazia. So, all of the states must think whether it is worth waiting for the tragedy to come to their own home or whether it is better to nip the evil in the bud.

[Kalinkina] Considerable staff reshuffles have taken place in the Russian leadership. Kozyrev has left his post; Chubays has resigned.... How do you assess such changes?

[Karatchenya] I knew these people very well. They are the people of the new formation, particularly, Chubays. But perhaps such a time came when the president must make a choice. I assess this as an indicator of the fact that Yeltsin will run in the presidential elections, although he did not announce his intentions. Hence, there appeared political figures who had to be "victims." Politics is a very delicate thing, and a good politician senses both the competition and the situation and, to tell you the truth, he places responsibility on other people.

The president of course will not take all the responsibility, although I have never seen Yeltsin hiding behind someone's back.

Belarus: German Business Delegation Completes Visit

WS3001091196 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0753 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On January 27 the visit of representatives of German business circles to Belarus on the invitation of President Alyaksandr Lukashenka came to an end. On the evening of January 26 members of the German delegation and Belarusian officials gave a short press conference on the results of the visit. As a representative of the German Federal Ministry of Economy told reporters, Germany is extremely interested in cooperation with Belarus and realizes well the importance of the attraction of foreign investments for the Republic. But, as he said, "before eating one should enquire about the quality of food". That is why the main objective of the visit was familiarization with Belarusian conditions for business. During numerous meetings at various levels the German delegation took an interest in the situation with the protection of private ownership, the draft law on land, the establishment of free economic zones in Belarus, and a lot of other questions. Besides negative tendencies, the representatives of German business circles singled out a number of positive changes, in particular the adoption of the privatization

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program for 1996. The German government's decision to increase the Hermes credit line by DM100 million is evidence that German business circles are optimistic about the economic future of Belarus. Commenting on the specific results of meetings within the framework of the visit, Belarusian Minister for Foreign Economic Relations Mikhail Marynich singled out the conclusion of an agreement between Belvar, a former enterprise of defense-oriented industry, and Warta Bosch on the development of the joint production of storage batteries for agricultural machinery and cars. The authorized capital of the joint venture will total $9 million, another 11 million are expected to be invested as the production develops. Mr. Marynich also informed reporters of the conclusion of an agreement with Siemens on cooperation in the spheres of telecommunications, medical equipment production, power engineering, and transportation.

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Germany to Belarus, Mr. Gottfried Albrecht, drew the attention of those present to the importance of cooperation between representatives of small and medium businesses in the two countries because 50 percent of the investments in the German economy are made by such companies. The German party stressed that it was interested in "absolutely all" spheres of the Belarusian economy, from small enterprises of food industry to large joint productions in machine-building, chemical industry etc. In conclusion Mr. Marynich emphasized again the importance of such visits, and informed the press that the parties had arranged about a visit by a large group of businessmen from Nordrhein-Westfalen to Belarus in September this year.

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Kazakhstan

Nazarbayev Congratulates Yeltsin on Russia's Admission to CE

LD2901152696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1450 GMT 29 Jan 96

[By Gennadiy Kulagin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ALMATY, January 29 (ITAR-TASS) — Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev sent a message of congratulations to Russian President Boris Yeltsin on the occasion of the Russian Federation's admission into the Council of Europe [CE].

The decision to admit Russia recognised its extremely important role in maintaining stability in Europe and ensuring the universal observance of human rights under the conditions of the new political situation which emerged after the end of the confrontation period, the message says.

Nazarbayev expressed confidence that Russia's participation in the work of the Council of Europe will promote the democratisation of Russian public life, and give an example to other CIS members.

Russia's admission into the Council of Europe is an important landmark on the path of its integration into Western democratic institutions. It will also guarantee the irreversibility of its decision to build a law-governed state, he said.

Nazarbayev Opens First Session of New Parliament

LD3001080296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0709 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Amangeldy Akhmetalimov and Gennadiy Kulagin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ALMATY January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — A new parliament of Kazakhstan opened its first session today with a large report of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev. Parliamentary elections were held there last December.

Unlike the Supreme Soviet, a leftover of Soviet times, the new parliament is far smaller by its size and consists of two chambers — the Senate made up of 47 members, and the Majlis (67 members).

Separate sessions of the Senate and the Majlis are expected to be held today, which will be chaired by the head of state and the head of the Central Electoral Commission respectively. They first thing they will do will be to elect speakers and deputy speakers of the two parliamentary chambers. In accordance with the legislation, the candidature of the chairman of the Senate will be suggested by the president, while candidates to the post of the speaker of the Majlis will be suggested by deputies to the Majlis themselves.

The structure of the new parliament is very much different from that of the previous one, the main difference being the existence of the two chambers. Besides, it is more compact. Both chambers have been formed, on the whole, the only thing left is the by-elections in February of two senators and one member of the Majlis. This structure is aimed at promoting the effective law-making work of the parliament. The right of the legislative initiative is exercised in the Majlis by the legislators and the government. Draft laws, adopted by the Majlis, are further submitted for the consideration of the Senate.

A procedure of working on draft laws has been developed, in case they are rejected by the Senate, or the president has some objections. The parliament itself determines the procedure for discussing draft laws and other legislative acts, and in cases stipulated by the Constitution, this is done by the president.

Tajikistan

Rakhmanov, Grachev Discuss Military Training, Aircraft Bases

LD2901180596 Dushanbe KHOVAR in Russian 0830 GMT 29 Jan 96

[Unattributed report: "Pavel Grachev: 'Russia Will Provide Support to Tajikistan'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov received Army General Pavel Grachev, the Russian defense minister, on 27 January. Grachev arrived in Dushanbe with the aim of familiarizing himself with the political and military situation on the Tajik-Afghan border, and of inspecting the Russian 201st Motorized Rifle Division, which forms part of the CIS collective peacekeeping forces.

After a meeting with Grachev, the Tajik president told journalists that the meeting took place in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and reciprocal confidence. Emomali Rakhmanov said: "We discussed a wide range of questions representing our common interests."

Emomali Rakhmanov and Pavel Grachev answered questions put by journalists.

Rakhmanov categorically denied rumors about his resignation, which have been circulating outside the republic in recent days. He told the journalists that there were political forces attempting to destabilize the social and political situation in the country. The president said: "I was elected by the people, and I will not leave in mid-course."

The head of state also noted that the difficult days are over for the republic.

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Concerning the situation inside the republic, the president said that he had a personal telephone conversation with Ibod Boymatov, [who seized hostages in Tursunzade on 26 January], the former chairman of the Executive Committee of the town of Tursunzade and a brigade commander of the Tajik Defense Ministry, and with Mahmud Khudoberdiyev, [who seized part of Kurgan-Tyube on 27 January], about a peaceful settlement of the problem. The president guaranteed there would be no prosecution if they surrender arms.

Pavel Grachev said Russia would provide the utmost assistance to the young Tajik Army, including military, technical, and other material resources. The Russian side will provide practical help in training troops of the Tajik Armed Forces through the Russian 201st division.

According to Grachev, the possibility of basing Russian aircraft technology in Tajikistan was touched on in the meeting with Emomali Rakhmanov. Grachev told journalists that "Russia will not leave Tajikistan; we will provide support and stand up for it."

Former Mayor Denies Seeking Removal of Russian Troops From Tajikistan

LD2901143496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1326 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dushanbe, 29 Jan (ITAR-TASS) — Ibod Boymatov, former mayor of the Tajik city of Tursunzade, today categorically denied allegations by some of the mass media that he is demanding the withdrawal of Russian troops from Tajikistan.

"Russia is a guarantor of peace and stability in our republic," he said in an exclusive interview with ITAR-TASS. "Neither I nor my compatriots have ever come out in favor of the withdrawal of the Russian troops or of the CIS collective peacekeeping forces."

It is already known that Ibod Boymatov and his armed supporters seized a hotel in Tursunzade in the morning of 26 January and submitted a number of political demands to the Tajik leadership.

"Our demands remain unchanged: the government that is not able to steer the republic out of the crisis and ensure that the long-suffering people live decently must resign," Ibod Boymatov said. "At the same time, we are not opposing the president, thus respecting the will of our compatriots, who elected him to the high post in November 1994."

The head of the detachment that seized the hotel said he is ready to negotiate with representatives of the authorities, "but not at gun-point". "We demand that additional forces of the power ministries brought in from Dushanbe should be withdrawn from the town and the blockade of Tursunzade should be lifted by noon on 30 January. Otherwise we will have to take appropriate measures," he said.

The former mayor also denied that he has taken hostages. "We have not taken anyone hostage, neither have we disarmed any servicemen, as has been alleged," he said. "The statement that a 300-strong group supporting Boymatov entered Tursunzade from Uzbekistan backed by armored vehicles is equally false. I regard it as an attempt to bring our fraternal republics into a conflict and increase inter-ethnic tension in the country," Boymatov said.

He stressed that his supporters "are demanding that there should be no bias in covering the Tursunzade events both by the mass media and the republic's authorities."

Tajik Leaders Discuss Southern, Western Rebellions

LD3001094396 Dushanbe Radio Tajikistan Network in Tajik 0500 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A joint meeting of the government and the Supreme Assembly Presidium was held yesterday under the chairmanship of President Emomali Rakhmanov. Safarali Rajabov, chairman of the Supreme Assembly, the deputy chairmen of the Supreme Assembly, members of the Supreme Assembly Presidium, Prime Minister Jamshed Karimov, the deputy prime ministers, ministers, and the chairmen of state committees of the republic attended the meeting.

Prosecutor-General Amirqul Azimov gave a report on the situation in Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzade, which was followed by a detailed exchange of views on the subject. Participants in the meeting unanimously supported a proposal by President Emomali Rakhmanov to solve the situation in the country by peaceful means.

Emomali Rakhmanov instructed the government and the media to provide an accurate explanation of the current situation to people in [the southern and western] cities and districts.

At the same time, the law enforcement agencies were entrusted with the task of enhancing their activity in establishing government order in the affected cities.

This report was obtained from the president's press center.

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Nazarov Opens Sixth Session of Inter-Tajik Talks

LD2901202596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2012 GMT 29 Jan 96

[By Anna Kurbanova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ashgabat, January 29 (ITAR-TASS) — Tajik Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov, the new head of the governmental delegation, opened the 6th plenary session of inter-Tajik talks in Ashgabat on Monday. He replaced at this post First Vice-Premier Mahmadsaid Ubaydullayev.

Taking part in the talks are delegations representing the authorities of Dushanbe and representatives of the armed opposition united in the Movement of the Muslim Revival of Tajikistan.

"We shall be holding talks on the basis of the achieved results and strictly within the framework of the protocol signed in August 1995 by President of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmanov and leader of the opposition forces Said Abdullo Nuri," the Tajik foreign minister said.

At the same time, the minister believes that this does not rule out making certain compromises. "The Tajik Government will study all reasonable proposals by the opposition, however within the framework of the existing power structures in the republic," he stressed.

The replacement of the head of Tajik governmental delegation in the inter-Tajik negotiating process "does not suggest a change in the position of the Tajik leadership in the dialogue with its political opponents in the inter-Tajik settlement," Nazarov said.

At the Moscow meeting of the council of the heads of state of the Commonwealth, held earlier this month, its participants expressed the hope for the achievement of concrete results in the near future in the course of the political dialogue at the inter-Tajik talks.

The issues connected with the political settlement of the inter-Tajik conflict were among the central themes discussed at the talks of the leadership of Tajikistan, on the eve of the beginning of a regular round of the inter-Tajik dialogue, with the representative Russian delegation led by Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov which arrived in Dushanbe on a brief visit.

Summing up the results of the visit at a short news conference, the Russian foreign minister expressed a viewpoint that the situation in the republic would be stabilised if a dialogue was organised with the opposition "naturally on the basis of the existing Constitution and the free expression of the people's will, however, taking into account the fact that the opposition is also part of these people. This fact should be taken into consideration," Primakov said.

In Moscow where he participated in the meeting of foreign ministers of the Commonwealth countries, Nazarov, several days before a regular round of the inter-Tajik talks, gave to understand that Dushanbe would firmly insist on the mutual observance by the sides of the provisions of the framework agreement of August 1995 which envisaged in particular the renunciation of armed struggle as a basis for the further negotiations.

Government Stand at Inter-Tajik Talks Not Changed

LD2901163796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1350 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — The Tajik government has not altered its stand at negotiations with the opposition despite changes in the delegation leadership, new head of the Tajik government delegation and Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov told a news conference in the Tajik capital Dushanbe Monday.

Nazarov was appointed delegation head by Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov on January 29. Before that the delegation was headed by Tajik First Deputy Prime Minister Mahmadsaid Ubaydullayev. The reason for Ubaydullayev's replacement is the need for his presence in Tajikistan because of the aggravated military situation in some regions. Ubaydullayev is in charge of Tajikistan's power departments.

Nazarov said he is ready for a reasonable compromise with the opposition as need be. "However, this compromise should not run counter to the Tajik constitution and the protocol of August 17, 1995, signed by opposition leader Sayed Abdullo Nuri and Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov," he noted.

In response to an INTERFAX question, the foreign minister said that situation in Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzade, where two former field commanders of the Popular Front launched actions against the Tajik government late last week, "will not affect the progress of inter-Tajik talks in Ashgabat."

The creation of a joint consultative body is the most topical item on the talks agenda, said Nazarov. He is basically prepared to discuss mechanisms of the body's creation and functioning.

The fifth round of Ashgabat talks is expected to resume tonight or on January 30. The round started on November 30, 1995, and was suspended on December 21 due

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to New Year celebrations. Head of the opposition delegation Akbar Turajonzoda has arrived in Ashgabat.

Group's Leader Demands Dismissal of Rakhmanov's 'Entourage'

LD2901183896 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1400 GMT 29 Jan 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] The standoff in the town of Tursunzade continues for the fourth day running. The central hotel has been captured by an armed group headed by Ibod Boymatov, former chairman of the town executive committee. There is no shortage of speculations about what made Boymatov take this step and what his demands are.

[Begin Boymatov recording] We have only one demand. I want to speak openly: Until the president's entourage goes.... [pauses] We will hold out until they all go. President Emomali Rakhmanov is a very good president. He is young, he has just started leading all the work in the Republic. Our president, I want to emphasize it again, is doing his best. However, he is surrounded by those who are pushing him into an abyss. They have already brought him to the brink of the abyss — just push him, and that's it. You see? Thank God, he has us, fair people. We will hold him back and take him away from the abyss. [end recording]

Some news agencies have reported on Boymatov's demands to withdraw the CIS peacekeeping contingent and the Russian border guards.

[Begin Boymatov recording] We need Russia. You see what is going on here. First, we can do nothing without Russia. We are very pleased that Russia is supporting us. Our television has reported that I allegedly demanded that the Russian troops should be withdrawn. No, this is not true. [end recording]

Boymatov believes his main enemy is the so-called mafia, which does not want to leave the Tajik people in peace. The standoff continues. [video shows correspondent against background of a building and tanks, and Boymatov addressing camera]

Kurgan-Tyube Rally Supports Demands of Army Commander

LD3001092096 Voice of Free Tajikistan in Tajik 0300 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A crowded rally has been held in Kurgan-Tyube, at which Mahmud Khudoyberdiyev, the commander of the Defense Ministry's 1st Brigade, which has taken action against the anti-people policy of Emomali Rakhmanov, made a speech and explained the reasons for his disagreements with the Dushanbe regime. Those attending the rally supported the demands put forward by the brigade's personnel and demanded the restoration of Kurgan-Tyube Region, the removal of the region's leaders and the resignation of Emomali Rakhmanov's government.

At the same time, the opposition's headquarters in Kurgan-Tyube has announced that the Department of Internal Affairs, the regional committee, and other state departments have been put under their authority and that they are in control of all the administrative affairs of Kurgan-Tyube.

Rebel Military Unit Returns to Barracks

LD2901150696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1444 GMT 29 Jan 96

[By Galina Gridneva]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, January 29 (ITAR-TASS) — Tajik rebel Colonel Makhmud Khudoyberdyev, who has led a revolt in the city of Kurgan-Tyube, assured CIS peacekeepers on Monday that he had not demanded their withdrawal from Tajikistan, the press centre of the CIS peacekeeping force said.

A group of rebels led by Khudoyberdyev entered Kurgan-Tyube on January 27 and demanded that the government step down. Some media reports said that they also demanded a withdrawal of the Russian troops from Tajikistan.

On Monday, the situation in Kurgan-Tyube remained stable. Khudoyberdyev and his group have left the city and returned to their military unit stationed nearby for talks with the authorities.

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan: Karimov, Russia's Primakov Discuss Tajik Stability

LD2901174796 Tashkent Uzbekistan Television in Russian 1430 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] As we have already reported, a Russian delegation led by Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov has paid a short visit to Tashkent. [passage omitted]

[Begin recording] [Primakov] We have a large field of common interests. One of these fields is the stabilization of the situation in Tajikistan, in which both Uzbekistan and Russia are interested. I think that our approaches are very close on how this should be achieved. Of course, these are on how to unite all internal forces, to consolidate all internal forces, on talks with the

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opposition, sufficiently constructive and fruitful talks, moreover. Of course, we are for peaceful, political ways of solving all the problems of Tajikistan.

We have received a new impetus here, during these talks. I think they have undoubtedly enriched us, and I think they will help us move ahead.

[Unidentified correspondent] Can we say that today you have synchronized watches on security in this region, particularly on the Tajik problem?

[Uzbek President Islam Karimov] As for synchronizing our watches, it may be too strident a phrase. After all, these questions were discussed at the penultimate CIS summit in Moscow, where [Russian President] Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin expressed the precise and clear position of Russia on the question of Tajikistan, which fully coincides with the position of Uzbekistan.

There was a need to discuss these questions more concretely, in detail I would have said, with the aim of giving a new impetus to the process of the inter-Tajik talks, which are to be held today in Ashgabat.

That is why I am glad that our old friend has arrived, I am repeating this in the truest sense. Yevgeniy Maksimovich Primakov, as someone who knows our region well, is on his first visit to Uzbekistan in this role [as foreign minister]. We have conducted very fruitful conversations on practically all questions connected with the matters of this region, particularly our positions on Tajikistan. I would like to take this opportunity to note that Uzbekistan fully supports all the issues, and all the aims expressed by Russia for the settlement of the Tajik conflict. [passage omitted]

[Karimov] The matter is that there should be stability in this region. This is in the interests of Russia and of all states in this region. That is why you do not have to wear epaulettes to fight for stability and peace in this region. [end recording]

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Azerbaijan

Baku Hopes To Settle Nagorno-Karabakh Problem in 1996

LD2901183696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1648 GMT 29 Jan 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [no dateline as received] Baku believes that the chances to reach a comprehensive agreement on Nagorno Karabakh in 1996 "are real by 90 percent" after Yevgeniy Primakov took the office of head of the Russian Foreign Ministry, a source in the presidential administration told Interfax.

According to the source, Baku, in particular, "is inspired by long and good relations" between Aliyev and Primakov.

Baku also attracted attention to Russian President Boris Yeltsin's statement at the final press conference staged after the CIS summit in Moscow. Yeltsin said that the status of an autonomous republic is to be "the upper boundary" of the autonomy for the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh. "This is the limit of a compromise which Azerbaijan is ready to make regarding the status of Nagorno Karabakh."

In general, Russia's resoluteness to seriously advance the Karabakh peace process "is already obvious," the source believes. The Chechen problem forced Moscow "to better understand what the struggle with separatism, for ensuring territorial integrity, means."

At the same time the source assessed the possibility of Moscow's mediator assistance in influencing Yerevan and Stepanakert on the Karabakh issue "as relatively restricted." He also attracted attention to the fact that the expected meeting between Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev and Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan in the framework of the CIS summit in Moscow which was to discuss key problems of the Karabakh settlement did not take place.

According to the source, "the dialogue between Aliyev and Ter-Petrosyan in Moscow was senseless" due to insubstantial results of the Moscow round of the Armenian-Azerbaijani talks which was concluded just on the eve of the summit.

Georgia

Shevardnadze Remarks on Economy, Corruption, Abkhazia

LD2901133296 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0827 GMT 29 Jan 96

[Regular weekly interview with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze by Nato Oniani in Tbilisi on 29 January — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Oniani] Mr. President, the past economic week was again characterized by the stability of the lari and the energy crisis. Our foreign partners are also able to see that despite the crisis a process of economic stabilization is under way in the country. While it is not very pleasant to hear Ms Bertini, the visiting head of the UN food program, said that the volume of humanitarian aid to Georgia will be gradually reduced, on the other hand, the process of economic stabilization is under way and this is very important. Annual results were summed up at yesterday's expanded meeting of the Georgian Government. It was also indicated that bread price rise are expected due to high wheat prices on the international market.

[Shevardnadze] Thank you. Good morning. There were fundamental discussions at yesterday's expanded meeting of the government. The process of overcoming the crisis has actually started. The role of international organizations and our foreign partners is very big in this process, especially the unselfish assistance rendered by the Federal Republic of Germany. Other countries have also contributed to this process. Fuel was given to us; I refer to the European Union [EU] and the United States, which have allocated over 100,000 tonnes of fuel oil, and so on. Good prospects have been created by restoring the high-voltage Kavkasioni line [connecting Georgia to Russia's grid] and the generating units of the Tbilisi district power station, the adjustment of which required a lot of labor and funding. There are fair indications that Georgia will have its own gas and oil.

In spite of this, as I said at yesterday's meeting, the payments due for consumed power must be regarded as the key to everything. Unless there is a radical change in the issue and unless we manage to ensure that payments are made for electricity consumed, the country will not be able to get out of the energy crisis and the torment and suffering caused by it will continue for several more years. The debts to the Sakenergo [Georgian energy] department have reached disastrous figures. They are so embarrassing that I dare not even mention them. The payments currently made are not even sufficient to pay salaries to the Sakenergo staff. They have not received salaries for five or six months.

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We all are to blame — state establishments, private business, and citizens of the country. All of us! It is time the whole country realized that the sphere of energy concerns everyone. It is the basis of the well-being of each family and the whole state. Real stability and prosperity cannot be reached without it. I call on each citizen, each state figure, each individual to support us more vigorously in managing this fundamental issue.

As for a statement about cutting humanitarian aid, this is understandable. Yet, there are different views too, which say that Georgia will need more humanitarian aid during the next one or two years. Our friends in the United States are inclined not to reduce the volume of aid. But a trend to reduce aid seems to be developing.

Georgia's prestige has been rising abroad and the right stance toward Georgia has already been established to spend more on investing in the country's economy than in giving aid and grants. This is the correct approach, and it means that we will be able to achieve a crucial turn, primarily in the sphere of production, by cooperating with foreign investors, businessmen, and bankers, and to create normal living conditions.

As far as an expected rise of bread price is concerned, this results from high world market prices. We have to keep in mind that the world market will affect us in future too. One cannot imagine the process of integration otherwise. We depend almost entirely on the world market for wheat. A price increase is essential. But in order to protect the population socially, the added price will be fully compensated.

Meanwhile, we are taking steps to develop grain production in the country and to encourage grain imports. Grain imports will be the only import to be exempted from duty. All other benefits and duty and tax exemptions will be abolished. At least this is what the parliament is inclined to do. I believe that having heard these words, many businessmen will realize that dealings with wheat have good business prospects. [passage omitted]

[Oniani] At Saturday's meeting representatives of power structures paid special attention to combating corruption. In fact, this was a pleasant moment because it means that terrorism in the country is no longer the main topic as it once was. We may recall that this issue has fortunately not been topical for Georgia for the past five or six months. Only the process of revealing past terrorist acts is topical today.

You mentioned specific instances of corruption within the highest echelons of the government which were not difficult to anticipate. Consequently, a question arises — was Shevardnadze really unaware of crimes committed by individual high-ranking officials? This has been said fairly openly at parliament sessions and by the population in general.

And yet another question. When terrorism reached its peak, you set up a special commission headed by Jaba Ioseliani. We all know what happened then and the fate of some of the members of the commission. Are you going to establish a new commission to fight corruption, and if so who will head it?

[Shevardnadze] I will answer in general terms. The fight against corruption has developed alongside the strengthening of the state. Not only is a powerless country involved in a civil war unable to fight corruption but it often creates conditions for corrupt clans to reign. Unfortunately, this is what history has been teaching us. We started fighting corruption only after the position of the state had become stable and appropriate levers had been found. No-one can fight corruption, terrorism, and banditry empty-handed. Premature slogans and statements would be like brandishing a sword in the air. Many corrupt persons of the highest and middle echelons have been exposed and the population has been informed about this. The main thing is that new structures established on the basis of the Constitution will enable us to destroy and erase the obstacles that have been created with the aim of promoting bribery, extortion, and bureaucracy.

The abolition of the Cabinet of Ministers is an important step in this direction. [passage omitted]

I am not going to say that we can expect an easy victory. This will be a long and difficult fight for honesty, high moral standards in society, and true business which serves its country and its people and implies the well-being of each individual.

As for the commissions, be it against terrorism or corruption, I believe that we will not need commissions like that because parliament has already adopted the law on the Security Council. This is already a legal emergency body, whatever you call it, which will coordinate issues related to the country's defense and security. This will indeed include the fight against terrorism, corruption, and other activities which undermine the power of the state.

[Oniani] Security Minister Kviaraia said at the government's expanded meeting on Saturday that tension in Abkhazia has been building up and that Sukhumi has been gradually becoming a center for international terrorism. Yesterday was the beginning of the implementation of the 19 January [CIS summit] results. We can say this because, as you predicted, the UN Security Council supported the CIS countries's demand for economic and other sanctions against separatists.

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What can we expect in the near future? At the government meeting you spoke about ways of settling the Abkhazian and Tskhinvali issues. And yet another point. Do you think that if the process is delayed, there will emerge a need to settled the conflicts by using the Bosnian pattern?

[Shevardnadze] It is common knowledge that the situation in Abkhazia is difficult. This enhances the feeling of anxiety and regret that exists in each of us, myself included. I mention the word regret because it was possible to start settling the conflict long time ago on the basis of an agreement — I would say a just agreement — reached back on 3 September 1992. All the disastrous consequences could have been avoided. Unfortunately, events developed in accordance with a scenario written by the separatists and their foreign patrons.

Now, as I have said before, the circuit has closed. The UN Security Council, the European Union, the CIS countries with all their resolutions, decisions, categorical demands, and the like are unanimous in recognizing Abkhazia as an integral part of Georgia and in demanding that justice be restored as soon as possible. The results of ethnic cleansing and genocide, both acknowledged by international organizations, should be overcome as soon as possible.

We may recall that a resolution has been passed on economic sanctions, which has been supported internationally, and a mandate for peacekeeping forces is being drafted. We have to wait for the outcome. I believe that the process will be stepped up.

As far as the Bosnian pattern is concerned, I would say that the world community has drawn correct conclusions from the mistakes made after the end of the Cold War. This was displayed in its classic way in Bosnia. I do not think I am wrong when I say that we have to presume that the world will not endure long the existence of hot spots on the earth, including the Caucasus, because these hot spots endanger other countries and other regions. Thus, if the conflict drags on, we will have to consider many options. Yet, the fire must be put out and it will certainly be put out. I would rather that the Abkhaz leaders gather all their courage to make, together with us, a step forward which will lead us to reach reconciliation between the two peoples and to surmount the conflict. [passage indistinct]

Shevardnadze Warns Ministers of Illegal Export

LD3001122896 Tbilisi BGI in Russian 2359 GMT 28 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [no dateline as received] Late in the evening on Saturday [27 January], the Georgian Government held a meeting on the results of 1995. The meeting discussed issues concerning law and order and human rights. [passage omitted] Here is a report by BGI correspondent Inga Dadiani containing excerpts from speeches delivered at the meeting by the chairman of the Georgian Parliament, Zurab Zhvania, and Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze. [passage omitted]

[Eduard Shevardnadze] "Last year we waged a fairly successful struggle against crime. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Prosecutor's Office take great credit for this.

"In 1995, 15,700 crimes were registered, which is 10 percent less than in 1994. A total of 4,729 serious crimes were committed, which is 19 percent less than in 1994. The number of homicides was 391, which is 35 percent less than in 1994." [passage omitted]

"By signing the decree abolishing the Mkhedrioni paramilitary organization, I signed a verdict on legalized banditism in Georgia. It is common knowledge that a mafia of the nomenklatura existed in Georgia. It mainly consisted of military and criminal elements." [passage omitted]

"I have to tell you now what was the situation in the former Cabinet of Ministers of Georgia. For several weeks I have been studying documents from the Cabinet of Ministers. It has been literally giving me the shudders. We were absolutely right to abolish this structure in accordance with the constitution. What I am taking about concerns the activities of some deputy prime ministers. Let me assure you that they will have to answer for their work.

"Incidents involving illegal export of scrap metal from Georgia often come to my attention. Soon there will not be a single lathe left in our factories. I am warning you that if I ever hear again about scrap metal having been exported from Georgia, I as president will sack the minister who allowed it to happen and the head of administration in the district from where the scrap metal was exported. I am warning the leaders of Poti and Batumi and the leadership of the ports there that if a single gram of scrap metal is sent abroad, you will all lose your jobs.

"I instruct Interior Minister Kakha Targamadze to investigate companies which, under the wing of the Cabinet of Ministers, were engaged in the export of scrap metal." [passage omitted]

National Security Council Established in Georgia

LD3001124396 Tbilisi CONTACT INFORMATION AGENCY in 2359 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tbilisi [No date as received] — The Georgian parliament passed a law setting up

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the National Security Council. The law was signed by President Eduard Shevardnadze. It says that, in accordance with Article 99 of the Georgian Constitution, in order to organize military construction and the defense of the country, a National Security Council is established. It is headed by the president of Georgia.

The National Security Council is a consultative body under the Georgian president which will decide on issues of military construction, defense, security, domestic and foreign policy, stability, and law and order.

The composition, powers, and rules governing the activity of the Security Council are defined by the Georgian Constitution.

The law on the National Security Council consists of eight articles.

Abkhaz Speaker Links Sanctions With Need for Force

LD2901162696 Tbilisi BGI in Russian 1350 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] BGI correspondent Inga Dadiani has interviewed Tamaz Nadareishvili, chairman of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia.

[Correspondent] How can you explain your positive assessment of the CIS summit results? Earlier you used to assess all documents on Abkhazia as fiction.

[Nadareishvili] I used to view all documents adopted earlier on with great pessimism. This document is unusual in that it says that Abkhazia is an indivisible part of Georgia. I am not sure that all sanctions will be implemented fully, but even if 50 percent of them are, this will already be a step forward.

[Correspondent] Can we be sure that 50 percent of the sanctions will be implemented?

[Nadareishvili] We must work out a mechanism which will monitor the implementation of the document. Georgian border troops must cooperate with their Russian colleagues in order to monitor the receipt of cargoes supposedly to come through.

[Correspondent] The mandate of the Russian peacekeepers deployed in Abkhazia expires on 19 April. What can you forecast, how will events develop?

[Nadareishvili] There is one solution to the problem — that of using force.

[Correspondent] Will the departure of the peacekeepers mean settling the problem by means of force?

[Nadareishvili] There is no other way to resolve the Abkhaz issue. Economic sanctions are there to show the Abkhaz, Moscow, and the rest of the world that Georgia is doing everything to resolve the issue peacefully. The events of Chechnya and Dagestan have showed us that there is no alternative to the use of force.

[Correspondent] If the only solution to the problem is a military one then why do you attach such importance to economic sanctions adopted in Moscow?

[Nadareishvili] But this is not an exclusively political document.

[Correspondent] What role do you think Russia will play in this process?

[Nadareishvili] Russia has a decisive role in this process. The recent events allow me to hope that if Russia does not assume an active position then at least it will remain neutral. Vladislav Ardzinba has never decided anything on his own. This conflict would not have started without Russia's interference and neither will it end without its interference.

[Correspondent] It follows from what you are saying that Ardzinba is just putty in Russia's hands. How does it fit in with the fact that Yeltsin himself supports the sanctions?

[Nadareishvili] Ardzinba is leaning on certain forces — the communists and Zhirinovskiy. In the meantime, Ardzinba is well informed about the crimes committed by the Russian authorities behind the scenes. For instance, the Russian authorities refuse to extradite Igor Giorgadze [former Georgian security chief, implicated in assassination attempt on Shevardnadze] for the very same reason. The document adopted at the Russian summit gives the Abkhaz a last chance to accept Georgia's terms, otherwise force will have to be used.

Abkhaz Leader Objects to New Status of CIS Force

LD2901193796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1737 GMT 29 Jan 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — If the CIS peace force in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict zone acquires police function, any talks between Sukhumi and Tbilisi are out of the question, the Abkhazian leader Vladislav Ardzinba told INTERFAX.

Ardzinba said that the Georgian statement to the effect that the mandate of the peacekeeping force can be changed following February 19 without Abkhazia's consent misleads the Russian public.

Any change of the mandate is impossible unless both parties to the conflict agree, he recalled. Ardzinba

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believes that by insisting that the peacekeeping force be given police functions, Georgia deliberately drags Russia into the conflict.

Abkhazia will not tolerate any change of the mandate, he emphasized.

Abkhaz Foreign Minister Considers Russian Proposal

LD2901194696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1834 GMT 29 Jan 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 29 (INTERFAX) — The Russian proposal that Georgia and Abkhazia set up one state within the December 1991 borders of the Georgian SSR suits Abkhazia on the whole, Leonid Lakerbaya, the foreign minister of the self-proclaimed Republic of Abkhazia, told INTERFAX Monday.

On the other hand, numerous provisions of the Russian draft protocol on resolving the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict need clarification, he said.

Lakerbaya believes that a measure of understanding can be reached in the next round of Georgian-Abkhazian talks provided that there is no linkage between political issue and return of Georgian refugees.

As it thinks of a joint state with Georgia, Abkhazia bears in mind the facts of life today, he said. The country's residents do not, however, see Abkhazia outside Russia and believe that the 1810 manifesto on incorporation of Abkhazia into Russia is still valid, Lakerbaya believes.

Abkhazia is also worried by the fact that Georgia has not admitted that the war in Abkhazia was an error and a crime. Before it does so, Georgia cannot be trusted, Lakerbaya feels.

The failure on the part of the world community to deplore the Georgian action also acts as a psychological barrier.

For this reason, he continued, a joint state with Georgia is out of the question before solid guarantees are provided, notably by Russia.

Lakerbaya said that the decision taken by the CIS January summit to bring pressure to bear on Sukhumi did not disturb the Abkhazian leaders who had never rejected a negotiating process.

Lakerbaya said that the statement made by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Boris Pastukhov in an INTERFAX interview about Russia's preparedness to end its mediatory role and withdraw its forces from the region came as no shock to Abkhazia.

"Abkhazia will demand that the peacekeeping force be withdrawn if they are given police functions as demanded by Georgia. We are prepared to defend our land again," he emphasized.

Lakerbaya said that "Russia must understand Sukhumi's position. This is not a political whim. The survival of a whole nation is at stake."

Contrary to some reports, the seaport of Sukhumi is indeed blocked by Russian border guards, he insisted.

"What troubles us is not that the command of the Russian Caucasian Border Guard District issues a port entry permit on every occasion but the fact that they do so because they act on the authority of the Georgian government's ordinance of May 23, 1995.

"What if the Georgian government decides to stage a landing operation in Abkhazia? What will the Russian border guards do then?" he asked.

Situation in Abkhazia 'Tense' After CIS Summit

LD2901200596 Tbilisi IBERIA in Georgian 1705 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Gali, 29 Jan — Zurab Erkvania, chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, has told an IBERIA correspondent that following the adoption of the famous 19 January document, the psychological situation in Gali district has become tense. Special aggression can be felt from the Abkhaz side. In Erkvania's words, the separatists have introduced additional armed forces in Gali district.

"Establishing contacts with the Abkhaz side is tantamount to recognizing the so-called illegal police, therefore the Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia is against the restoration of the telephone connection between Gali and Zugdidi districts," Erkvania said. He also added that there were no palpable changes at the Psou River.

All current structures of the Abkhaz separatists' are continuing to function in Moscow.

[Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian at 1800 GMT on 29 January adds: "The situation in Abkhazia has become tense. In observers' view this has been caused by the adoption of the documents at the CIS summit. Rallies are being held all over Abkhaz territory. Participants of the rallies condemn Russia's stance on the Abkhaz conflict settlement. They call on the authorities to reinforce Abkhazia's security.

"Confrontation between the clans of Ardzinba and Tarba is continuing. At least 10 people have been killed in recent armed clashes."]

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Estonia

Estonia, Czech Republic To Cooperate on Military Project

WS3001093496 Tallinn BNS in English 1702 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, Jan 29, BNS — Estonia and the Czech Republic will cooperate in drawing up the draft of Estonia's new air surveillance system and Estonia also wishes to start early political and military talks with the Czech Republic.

Estonia should pattern its border surveillance system after the Visegrad countries' model, Estonian Defense Minister Andrus Oovel, who visited a Czech air space surveillance center on his recent visit to that country, told BNS.

"We rely on Czech assistance to receive as big a chunk as possible from the sum earmarked by the United States for the development of air space surveillance systems," the Estonian defense minister added.

Oovel said Estonia wanted to start negotiations on political and military issues with the Czech Republic soon, in order to discuss the state of European security architecture.

Estonia and the Czech Republic do not plan any joint military exercises, as the Czechs do not participate in military excercises together with any other country, outside the Partnership for Peace program, Oovel said.

Andrus Oovel and the Czech Defense Minister, Vilem Holan, Friday signed a framework agreement on cooperation between the two countries' defense ministries.

Problems connected with the expansion of NATO and cooperation within the European Union were discussed at a meeting of the two countries' defense ministries' delegations.

"We also touched upon all aspects of state defense management and establishment of civilian control over armed forces," Oovel told BNS. He said the two ministers also discussed issues of the standardization of armaments, the making of laws and cooperation in the Partnership for Peace Program.

"Besides, we discussed cooperation in the area of supplies, although we are not going to buy any armaments from the Czechs in the next five years, because of our agremeent with Israel," the Estonian defense minister said. "It is, however, possible to cooperate in learning to know the types of armaments produced elsewhere in the world."

The Estonian and the Czech defense ministers met for the first time last June. Then they agreed in principle to conclude a bilateral defense cooperation agreement. Also the appointment of a military attache to Tallinn is being considered.

Vahi, Russian Envoy Discuss Improvement of Relations

WS3001094796 Tallinn BNS in English 1702 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, Jan 29, BNS — Estonian Prime Minister Tiit Vahi Monday met with Russian Ambassador Aleksandr Trofimov who informed the prime minister of the official Russian position on the actual state of relations between the two countries and possibilities for the improvement of contacts.

Speaking of Russia's prioirities, Ambassador Trofimov named humanitarian and political issues, including those connected with Estonia's Russian-speaking population, the government's press officer told BNS.

Trofimov also stressed the importance of the conclusion of an agreement on borders, along with economic cooperation and religious issues.

Vahi explained to the Russian ambassador Estonia's position on the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church and the Estonian Orthodox church subordinated to the Moscow patriarchate.

Dwelling on trade and economic relations between the two countries, the prime minister said they could only develop on the basis of agreements. There were 15 agreements in force between Estonia and Russia and several other humanitarian and cooperation agreements about to be concluded.

Vahi assured Trofimov that Estonia was always interested in improving its relations with Russia. A precondition for the improvement of relations, the Estonian prime minister said, was to bring the two countries' views on important questions closer to each other, after which a meeting on heads of government level could be discussed.

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